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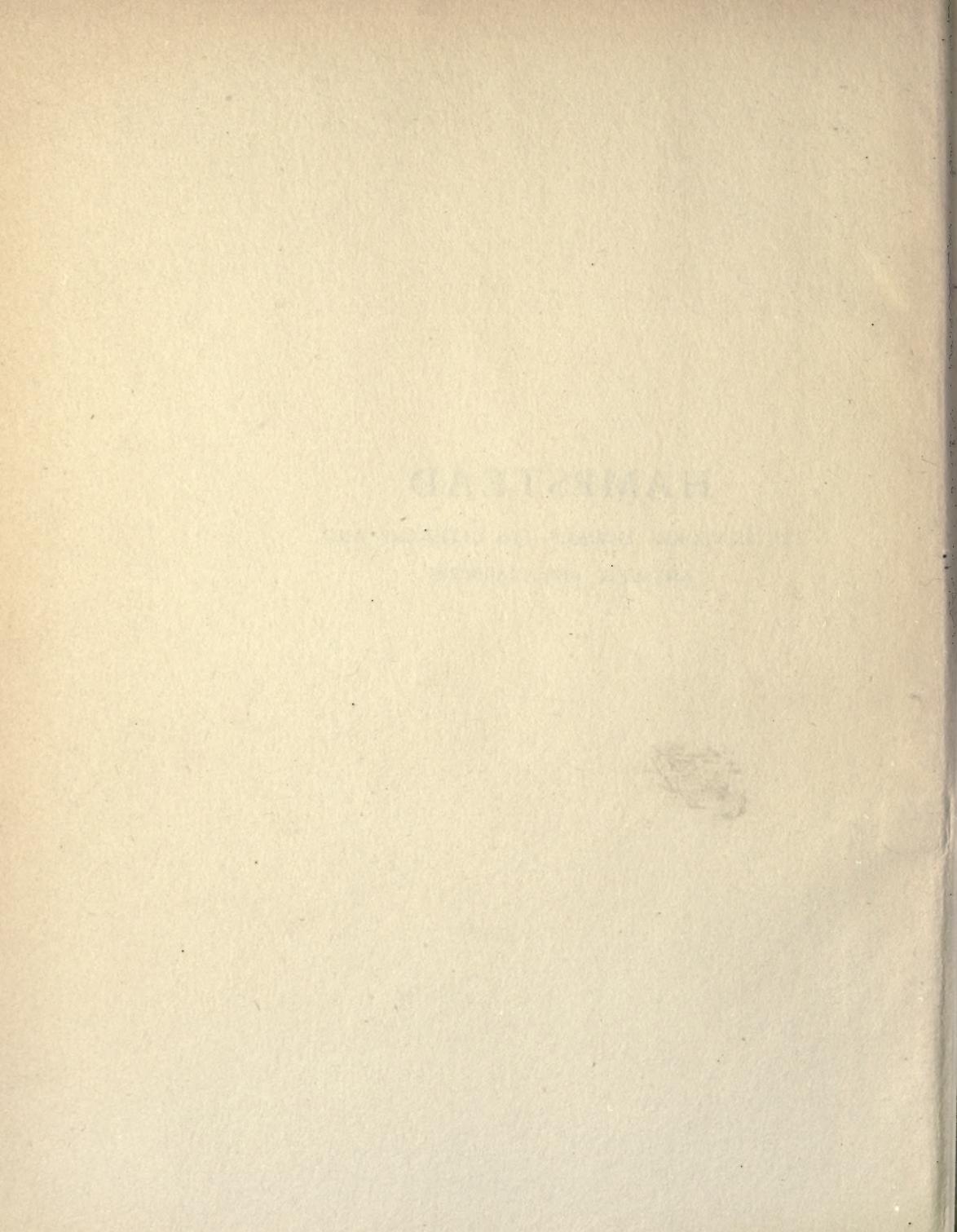
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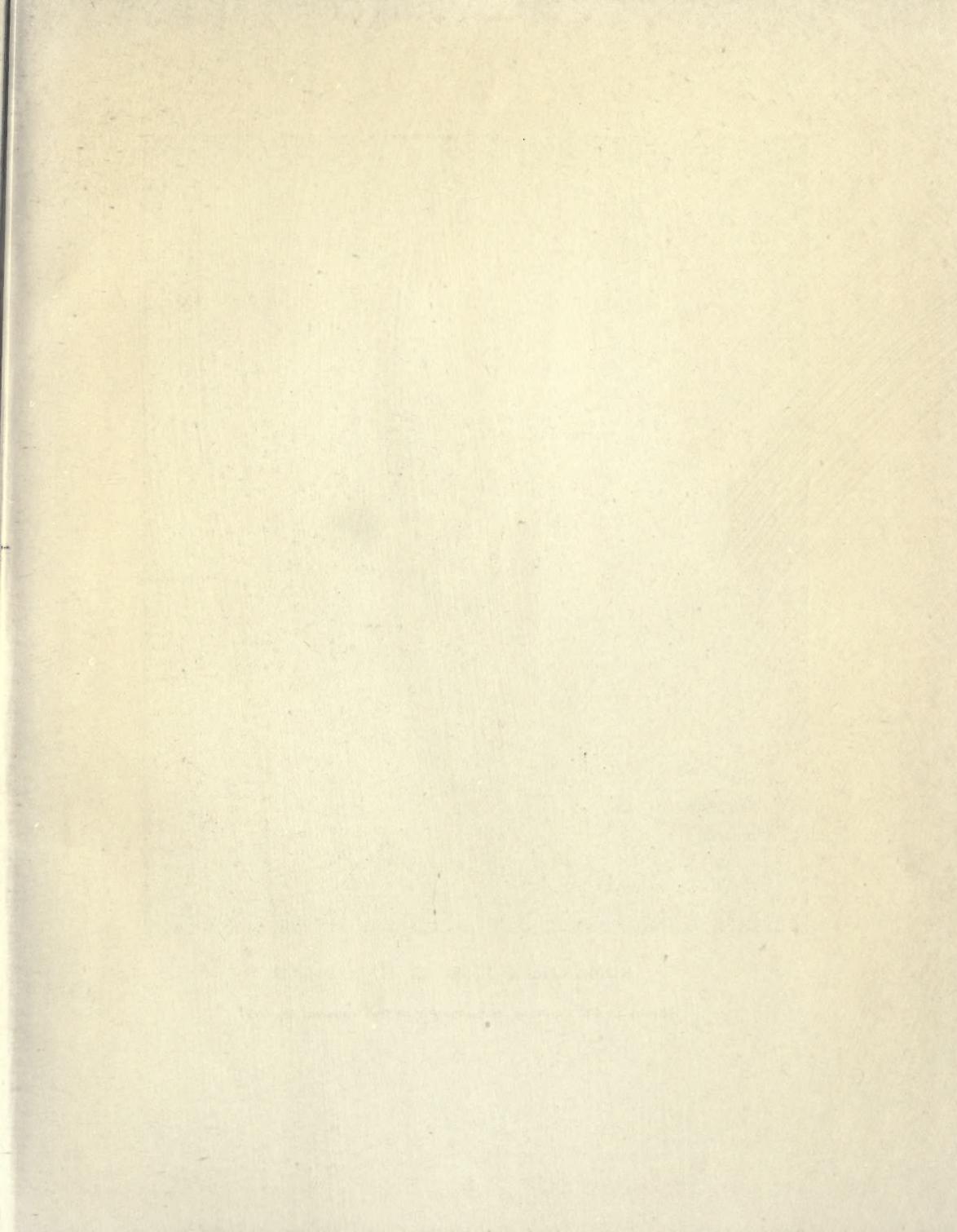
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ART DE MUSIQUE

HAMPSTEAD

ITS HISTORIC HOUSES—ITS LITERARY AND
ARTISTIC ASSOCIATIONS







ROMANTIC HOUSE AT HAMPSTEAD

(From an Oil Painting by Constable in the National Gallery)

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HAMPSTEAD

ITS HISTORIC HOUSES
ITS LITERARY AND ARTISTIC
ASSOCIATIONS

BY

ANNA MAXWELL

AUTHOR OF "CARPENTER AND KING"

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR AND MANY
REPRODUCTIONS OF OLD PRINTS AND
ORIGINAL DRAWINGS

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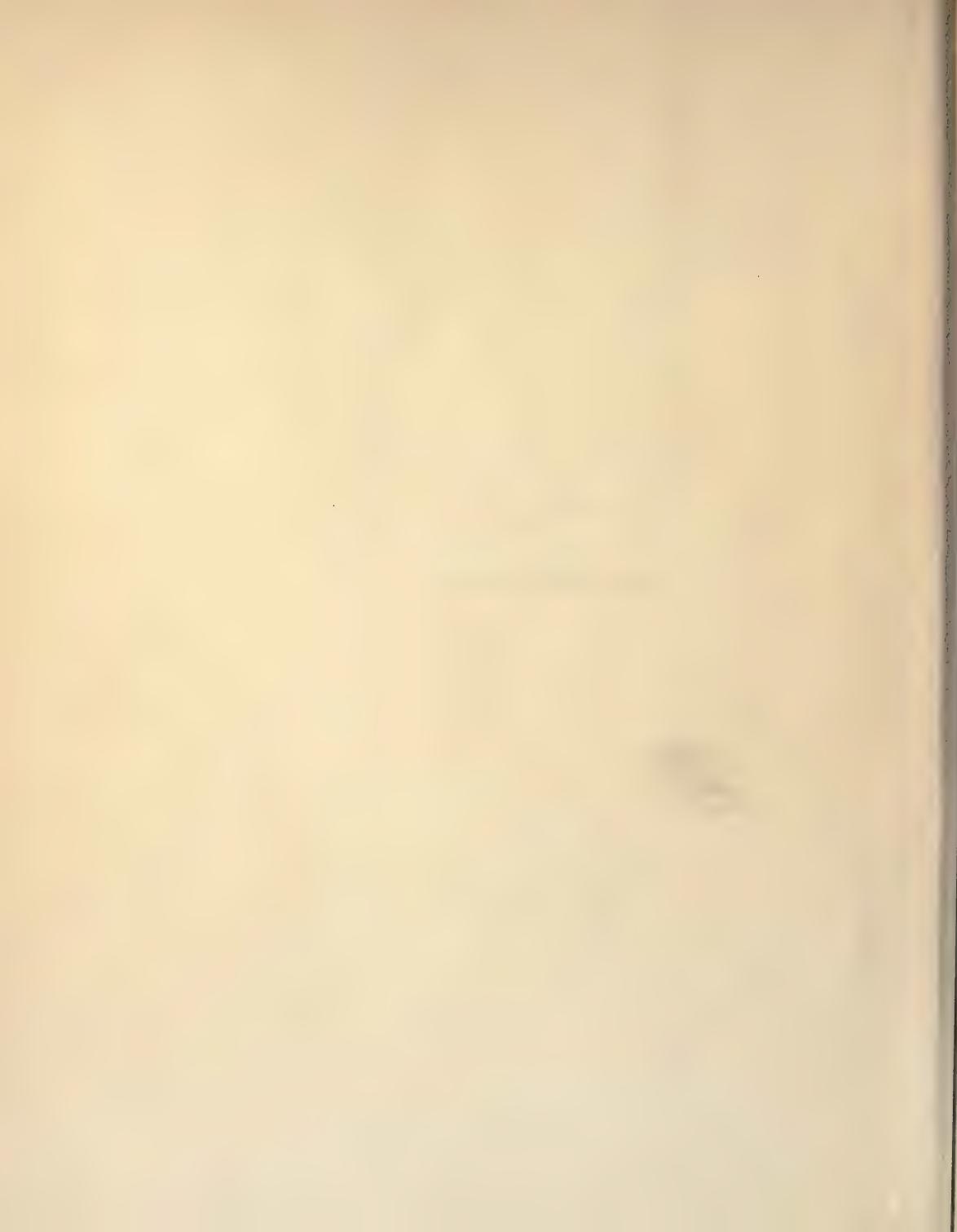
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TO
THE INSPIRING MEMORY
OF
"MARY BEAUMONT"



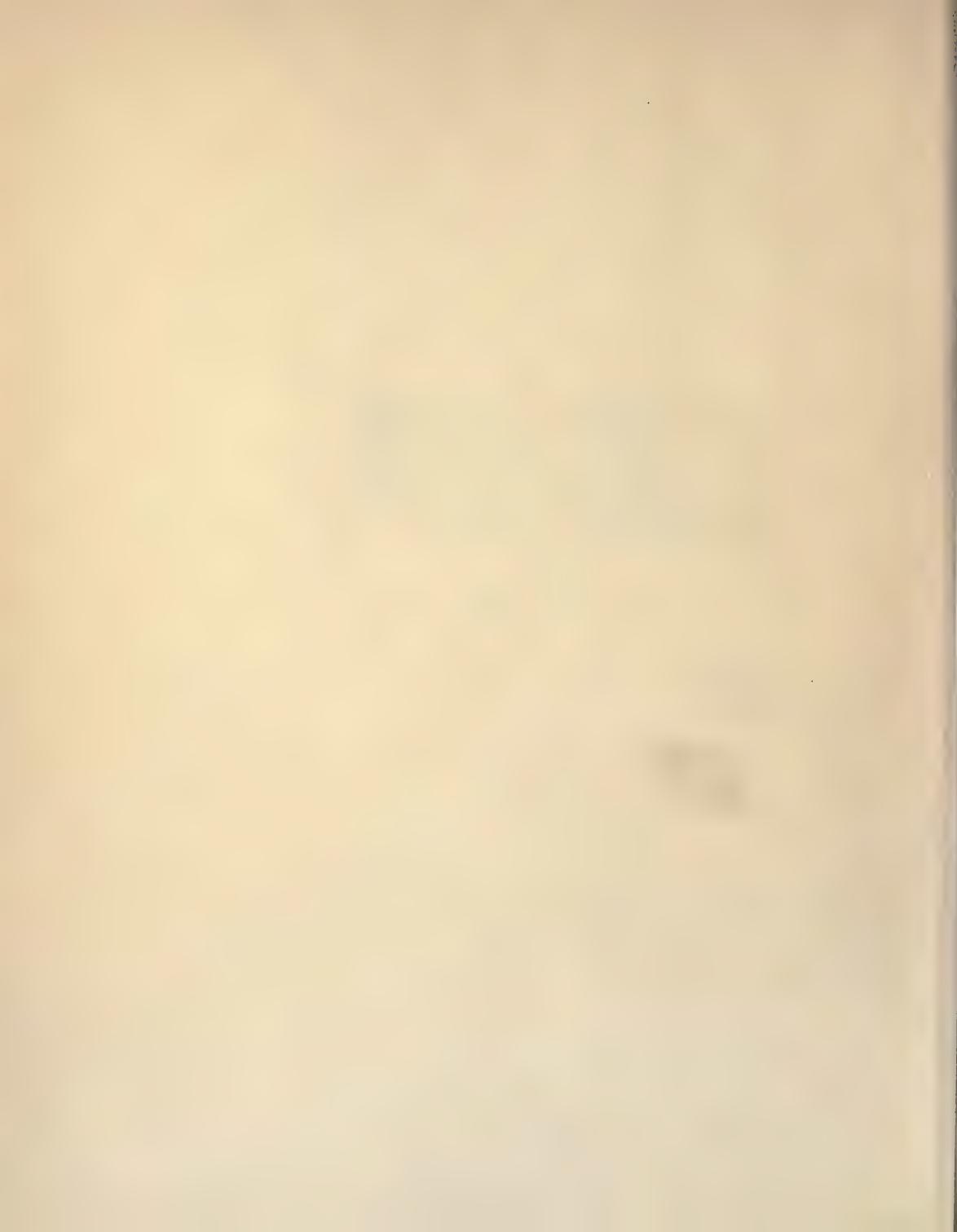
HAMPSTEAD COAT OF ARMS

The Abbey of Westminster is indicated by the blue ground, the indented chief of gold, and the red mitre; the family of Hickes by the fleur-de-lis on the cross, and the crest; the family of Noel by the chief again, the red lattice work upon it, and also, as in the case of the former family, by the buck's head in the crest. The Langhernes are represented by the silver cross and the red fleurs-de-lis, these being also part of the Hickes family arms, except that they are gold. The wreath of holly round the buck's neck is intended to commemorate the old seal.

Motto

NON SIBI SED TOTI

Quoted from E. E. Newton
Hampstead Annual, 1897



PREFACE

HAMPSTEAD is not the least delightful suburb of the great city which is to the world a wonder and a mystery. There are who think that it is the most picturesque and the healthiest of all the suburbs.

Hampstead as it meets the eye, as it is known to its residents, who bivouac, rather than live in it, is full of quaint beauty and surprising charm. But behind the Hampstead which is, is the Hampstead which has been. Some houses and buildings still standing have memories of famous and interesting persons ; and sites are known, where the buildings have disappeared, on which scenes of human life, and action, and creation were transacted.

It requires but the knowledge, the imagination, and the literary skill to recall and to repeople that vanished village in which Sir Harry Vane built a house—that village where great writers, even Samuel Johnson himself, were frequent guests, or transitory residents ; where Keats wrote his ode to the nightingale, or “stood tiptoe upon a little hill ” ; where Shelley was the guest of Leigh Hunt. Indeed, there is hardly a

great name in the history and literature of the country, from Lord Chatham, Lord Erskine, or Lord Mansfield, to Hannah Moore or Fanny Burney, that does not connect itself more or less remotely with this little hill crowned by the Bagshot sand.

The writer of the book, speaking from a lifelong knowledge, a heartfelt love and a diligent research, succeeds in reproducing this background of charm and interest. There are great and costly works on Hampstead, and there are small and unpretentious guides. But this has a place of its own. It endows with interest the houses and gardens, the roads and walks and alleys in which we still live. Hampstead becomes more than a suburb ; it becomes a habitation of beautiful memories. The fulness with which the lives of some famous people have been written, the inclusion of details not elsewhere accessible, give to the book a value for those who do not live in Hampstead, nor even intend to visit it.

Indeed, the local interest rapidly—from the first chapter onwards—passes into interest of a more general kind. The reader will quickly perceive that he is in the hands of a skilful and accomplished writer, and his one regret will be that the book is too short, for it gives the impression of being only a selection from masses of material which would have been equally welcome.

It is not the part of an Introduction to epitomise or to criticise the contents of the book. Its sole function is to introduce.

I only ask to share the gratitude which all will tender to the author, Mrs. Maxwell, who has thus vivified and beautified this northern suburb, though my only claim to gratitude is that I introduce her.

ROBERT F. HORTON

CHESILS
HAMPSTEAD

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE Author desires to record gratefully her indebtedness to Mrs. Wrentmore, in particular, for the loan of many rare prints and drawings from the Quaritch *Hampsteadiana* which are reproduced among the illustrations ; also to Councillor North and the Hampstead Borough Council for permission to reproduce several water colours in the North Collection of Hampstead drawings in the Town Hall ; and to others who have given willing, but invisible, help in the preparation of this book.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
The Conduit Fields—The Village Tree—“Jack Straw’s Castle”—Heath House—The Gibbet Trees—Pitt House—Golder’s Hill—“Bull and Bush” Inn—Stow House—Wyldes—Linnell and Blake—Erskine House—The “Spaniard’s” Inn—The “Upper Flask” Inn	17—50
CHAPTER II	
The Wells. First Period, Pump Room in Well Walk—Second Period, Pump Room in Weatherall Place	51—77
CHAPTER III	
Steele’s Cottage—Chalk Farm—Primrose Hill—Haverstock Hill—“Load of Hay” Inn—Belsize House—Rosslyn House	78—96
CHAPTER IV	
Vane House. Sir Harry Vane, Bishop Butler, Sir Thomas Neave, Charles Pilgrim—Stanfield House and Clarkson Stanfield—Chicken House—The Former Vicarage—Norway House — Flask Walk — Holly Hill — George Romney	97—117

	PAGE
CHAPTER V	
"Holly Bush" Inn—Holly Mount Chapel—Rev. James Castleden—St. Mary's Chapel—The Abbé Morel—The Parish Church and Manor—Church Row—Churchyard—New College	118—160
CHAPTER VI	
Joanna Baillie—The Old Poor House—Fenton House—New Grove House and George du Maurier—The Grove and Sir Gilbert Scott—2, Lower Terrace and John Constable	161—189
CHAPTER VII	
Upper Terrace and Canon Ainger—John Henry Foley—Judges' Walk and Capo di Monte—Mrs. Sarah Siddons	190—207
CHAPTER VIII	
Vale of Health—Hunt Cottage and Leigh Hunt—John Keats and Well Walk	208—235
CHAPTER IX	
South End Road—Keats' Grove—John Keats at Wentworth Place, now named Lawn Bank	236—269

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

IN COLOUR

ROMANTIC HOUSE AT HAMPSTEAD	<i>Frontispiece</i>
(From a painting by Constable)	
WYLD'S	<i>Facing page</i> 36
HEATH STREET	118
NORTH END IN 1830	192

HALF-TONE

CONDUIT FIELDS	18
SHEPHERDS WELL	18
GIBBET TREES	26
" JACK STRAW'S CASTLE "	26
" SPANIARD'S " INN	44
" UPPER FLASK " INN	46
FROGNAL PRIORY	50
POPE	60
JOHN GAY	60
THE WELLS—FIRST AND SECOND PERIODS (<i>Plan</i>)	64
LONG ROOM, WELL WALK	68
WEATHERALL HOUSE	68
VIEW OF THE (SECOND) LONG ROOM	72
STEELE'S COTTAGE	78
DUELLING FIELD	78
HAMPSTEAD FROM PRIMROSE HILL, 1756	82
SIR SPENCER PERCEVAL	84

	<i>Facing page</i>
SIR WILLIAM WAAD	84
BELSIZE HOUSE	84
LORD LOUGHBOROUGH	90
ROSSLYN HOUSE	90
POND STREET, HAMPSTEAD GREEN	97
SIR HARRY VANE	102
VANE HOUSE	102
CHICKEN HOUSE	108
CHICKEN HOUSE—WINDOWS	108
ROMNEY'S STUDIO	112
THE ABBÉ MOREL	122
ST. MARY'S CHURCH BEFORE 1745	126
PARISH CHURCH REBUILT 1747	132
CHURCH ROW	132
MRS. BARBAULD'S HOUSE, CHURCH ROW	142
JOANNA BAILLIE	161
THE POOR-HOUSE, MOUNT VERNON	166
THE HEATH, BY JOHN CONSTABLE	186
CONSTABLE'S HOUSE-DOOR	190
JUDGES' WALK AND MRS. SIDDON'S COTTAGE	190
JOHN KEATS	208
VALE OF HEALTH	212
VALE OF HEALTH POND	212
KEATS'S SEAT IN WELL WALK	224
SOUTH END ROAD, POND THE SITE OF STATION	236
HAMPSTEAD FROM THE KILBURN MEADOWS	238
LAWN BANK	240
SOUTH END POND, <i>circa</i> 1745	254

HAMPSTEAD

Its Historic Houses—Its Literary and Artistic Associations

CHAPTER I

THE CONDUIT FIELDS

THE VILLAGE TREE

JACK STRAW'S CASTLE

HEATH HOUSE

THE GIBBET TREES

PITT HOUSE

GOLDER'S HILL

BULL AND BUSH INN

STOW HOUSE

WYLDEN

LINNELL AND BLAKE

ERSKINE HOUSE

THE SPANIARD'S INN

THE UPPER FLASK INN

OF the picturesque village and its verdant surroundings, which are doubly dear to us now that they are fast fading away, a few spots remain which serve as an assurance, and which help us to reconstruct the scenes of the past.

There are residents, still, who once walked up the steep, narrow path, climbing over the stiles to the top of the Conduit Fields, where, at the spring of pure water,¹ pails used to be filled for a penny each, and the public water-carrier wore a wooden yoke like a milk-maid. What matter that vandalistic hands have

¹ Outside the wall of Conduit Lodge garden, Fitzjohn's Avenue, the original spring remains, and is used as a drinking fountain.

broadened the footway, built big houses on each side of it, and named it Fitzjohn's Avenue !¹ This is an innovation which we must severely ignore, for our passion is now to put back the great clock of Time, and banish these things of the present.

We children who ascended that hill found ourselves amply compensated for our climb when, turning round at the top we ran pell-mell down the fields, scrambling over the fences (stiles were permitted methods, and therefore to be scorned) arriving so breathless that we all but rolled into the tadpole pond at the bottom ! Not for us the wicket-gate, but some secret holes in the hawthorn hedge, through which we scrambled on hands and knees into Belsize Lane. Here the tall elms clasped hands high overhead, and beneath their branches the farmhouse buildings and turnpike had once stood, where the tollkeeper's little daughter, in her father's absence, had staunchly defended her post by refusing to let Queen Victoria's carriage pass without the customary payment of a penny ! The mother-monarch had driven out to Hampstead, as she frequently did during the infancy of her children, to view a house which might suit as a royal nursery for the summer months. It was Rosslyn House which was inspected on this occasion, but for some reason not chosen, though its fair grounds spread themselves over the north-eastern side of the meadows most breezy, most exhilarating ; soft waves of loose

¹ Fitzjohn's is the name of the country seat of Sir Spencer Maryon-Wilson, the Lord of the Manor of Hampstead.



CONDUIT FIELDS, 1800



SHEPHERD'S WELL—CONDUIT FIELDS



hay lay around, the hill toward the north rose higher and higher, until there appeared at length a mass of tall trees which half hid the quaint copper steeple of the old parish church. But higher still rose the hill, up and up to the glorious Heath, where the gale burst round the corner, and nearly blew us, shrieking with joy, into the Whitestone Pond. No massive red modern mansion stood then on the left to break the strong force of the westerly wind, for the ground now occupied by Tudor House had not then been taken from the heath, but remained an open space for the people. Here for generations, the villagers had sat, on summer evenings, after their work was done. Walking up the steep Heath Street, past the inn of the "Black Boy and Still," past the smithy's forge and the tiny red-tiled shops with large gardens beside them, at the summit the working folk watched the cricketers on the green space of land which, at first level enough, afterwards declined, reaching as far as the sign of the "Three Pigeons," which stood near the top of Froginal Hill. This red-tiled dwelling is now a private, aged and dignified residence, named Grove Cottage. It is occupied by Miss Constance Hill, who tells us :—

There is a shallow recess in the north wall of the house into which the sign was inserted. Beneath the dwelling are roomy cellars, used in former days for storing ale, and reached by a ladder.

Miss Hill also describes, respecting that open ground, "a great elm encircled by a seat, and known as the

'village tree,' stood in the midst. That tree," she adds, "is still standing, but is now enclosed in the grounds of Tudor House."

A cedar tree, under which Edward Irving preached, towers above the garden wall of Tudor House from within, and forms now, as it must have done for hundreds of years, a fine dark foreground to the golden sunset in the west, where Harrow steeple, on the distant hill, has been pointing to the skies since Archbishop Lanfranc consecrated it to God for that purpose eight hundred years ago. Since the death of its owner Tudor House has been bought by the munificence of Baroness Hirsch, to be used as a convalescent home for the suffering men and women of her race. In this retreat the sick and weary aliens dwell, lingering beneath the cedar of Lebanon, which, like themselves, has been transplanted from the East, and found a home in a foreign, but a friendly, soil.

Beyond the cedar and the elm was the site of the Flagstaff—always a point of common interest—on the summit of Telegraph Hill. Here the bonfires burnt for the communication of public news to distant parts, as when they had burned for the approach of Philip's Armada from Spain.

WHITESTONE POND.—Into the Whitestone Pond the tired, unharnessed horses were led to water, while the white stone itself marked the distance, 4 miles from St. Giles' Pound, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Holborn Bars. The milestone stood near to the stray-cattle pound, and close to the donkey stand, which remains to-day,

with its scanty but undying remnant of the Hundred Hampstead Donkeys. Black pigs were plentiful ; and the clerk on Sunday, from the reading desk in the church, would give out, in splendid pomp, that a Court Leet and Customary Court would meet “ on Tuesday next at Jack Straw’s Castle. Notice is hereby given that all pigs straying in the High Street shall be put into the Pound. Let us sing to the praise and glory of God Metrical Psalm 103 ; ” after which the overpowering functionary would sing, with his cheeks blown out like the fat cherubs on the wall behind him, who were puffing the Ten Commandments out of their mouths, while floating, with an affectation of righteousness, on white woolly clouds in the sky.

We learn from various accounts that pigs over-ran the whole village, and in the diary of a Heath-keeper for the year 1834¹ is recorded :—

Dr. White (the vicar) sent for me to pound six hogs. At night wall broken down and three hogs stolen from pound. Damage done by hogs great. This morning three howers filling in oales made by them.

This keeper had to give daily details to the steward of the “ manour of St. John’s, Hampstead,” and in his entries frequent remarks are found thus : “ Hoping it will meet with the Lord’s approval. I drove fifty-nine cows off the Heath, belonging to Mr. Veale.” The name of the cow-owner was surely assumed for professional purposes with the butcher when the fifty-

¹ Mr. E. E. Newton is now in possession of this interesting brass-bound volume, from which he has published some naive extracts.

nine calves were born ! Moreover, we read that Mr. Veale went to live at the great Cow Yard near the "Eyre Arms," Saint John's Wood.

On another date :—

Mrs. Heavens (Evans) sent for me, with Mrs. Heavens' compliments, hoping Mr. Lydden (the steward) will not allow any trees to be planted on the hill where the people dry their close, as it will hinder them having the morning her (air).

November, 1834, must have been an exceptionally mild autumn :

Apples on trees as large a crop as at first, grapes, laburnhem tree in full blossom. December 1st, cherry-tree full fruit. Quite out of season with man, but not with God. Is Will be Done.

July 22. A large triumphal arch erected near the Whitestone Pond (at the top of Heath Street) to the honour of King William IV. The occasion was the visit of the King and Queen Adelaide to a strawberry feast at Lord Mansfield's, Caenwood Place.

Still willing to justify his existence in the sight of the steward, the Heath-keeper enters :—

I stopped the fair at Pond Street. [One end of the large village green reached to the south side of Pond Street, which possessed houses on the north side only.] Would not allow the swings nor stawles to stand on the Lord's ground.

This village green did indeed belong to Sir Thomas Wilson ; but his ownership of the Heath was frequently disputed. The keeper writes :—

This day I was abuised by man with 400 sheep, going over the Heath to Lord Mansfield's. Said he had wright to rest them on the Lord's property.

The Heath was formerly a vast expanse of open moorland, which gradually became contracted, owing to successive grants, from the Lord of the Manor, of portions of the common land. In 1866 Sir Thomas Maryon-Wilson repeated the old offence of building on the Heath, and in so doing provoked outspoken opposition. Legal proceedings were set on foot by Mr. John Gurney Hoare, Mr. Lister, and Mr. Ware, who were copyholders, to prevent the Heath being destroyed, and a Heath Protection Fund was begun. Finally the matter was settled by the Metropolitan Board of Works buying the rights of the Lord—now Sir John Maryon-Wilson,¹ who had, during the long dispute, succeeded his brother, Sir Thomas: the cost of the Heath being over £55,000. About two hundred and twenty acres thus came under the control of the Board of Works, since which time great effort has been maintained to preserve the West Heath in its natural condition of luxuriant bracken, heather and gorse. That portion lying east of the Spaniard's Road and nearer to the original Heath Station is given up, on Bank Holidays, to the pastimes of the “nobility and gentry of the Borough,” to the swing-proprietors and the cocoa-nut sportsmen.

PARLIAMENT HILL.—In the year 1889 the Heath was enlarged by the addition of two hundred and sixty acres of Parliament Hill Fields. This purchase was

¹ The double surname of Maryon-Wilson arose from the fact that the owner of the Manor about the year 1745 was a lady of the surname of Maryon, who married a Wilson, landowner of Greenwich; which accounts also for the Maryon-Wilsons residing at Charlton rather than at Hampstead.

effected by public subscription, by the London County Council, and by the Hampstead and St. Pancras Vestries. Fifty acres of the new fields, lying in the former parish, were owned by Sir Spencer Maryon-Wilson ; the remainder, lying in that of St. Pancras, belonged to Lord Mansfield. The sum paid jointly to these two landowners for the extension ground amounted to £302,000.

The name of Parliament Hill originated from the fact that the companions of Guy Fawkes retired to this eminence in order to get a good view of the desired explosion at Westminster.

JACK STRAW'S CASTLE.—Beyond the flagstaff and on the same side of the pond stands the "Castle" Hotel where the Court Leet met. Concerning the full title of this inn, it is extremely doubtful whether Wat Tyler's chief captain ever came to Hampstead at all : no historic record of his visit exists. In the authentic chronicles of the reign of Richard II., Jack Straw certainly came to Highbury, and pulled down there the house of the Knights Hospitallers. This fact may have given rise to the old tradition that he set fire to the Priory of the Knights of Jerusalem, near to the old church at Hampstead. It is quite possible that his intention to do so was one of the insurgent sins told to his priest in his confession detailed in the true account of Wat Tyler's rebellion.

Professor Hales bids us conceive of " Jack Straw's Castle " as a merely poetic expression, and one which is found as a tavern sign in Oxfordshire, and which is

possible in any part of the country, on the strength of “Jack Straw” being a generic name (which might in effect be Hodge the Ploughman), and bearing, as it were, a relative position in agricultural districts to the Jack Tar’s Tavern in a seaport.

Contenting ourselves with fact, and with the nineteenth century, we know that Charles Dickens wrote to John Forster :—

You don’t feel disposed, do you, to muffle yourself up, and start off with me for a good brisk walk over Hampstead Heath ? I know of a good house where we can have a red-hot chop for dinner, and a glass of good wine.

“ This note,” adds Forster, “ led to our first experience of ‘ Jack Straw’s Castle,’ memorable for many happy meetings in coming years.” As one of the results of Dickens’s visits to the Heath we have the statement that “ Mr. Pickwick traced to their source the mighty ponds of Hampstead, and agitated the scientific world with his theory of tittle-bats.”

About the year 1730 a racecourse was laid behind the “ Castle ” Inn : this course, being earlier than those of Epsom and Ascot, became a place of widespread popularity, bringing crowds of varying social degrees, which rendered Hampstead more or less unbearable to its refined residents, at the season of the Heath’s greatest charm. At some date subsequent to 1748, by magistrates’ order, the course was closed. In Whitefield’s Diary for 1739, we read :—

Preached under a tree near the horse-course at Hampstead, the subject being the spiritual race ; most were attentive, but others mocked.

HEATH HOUSE.—The fine old house which stands full-face to the pond was bought in the year 1790 by Samuel Hoare, of the old Norfolk Quaker family, who had joined the firm of bankers in Lombard Street in 1772. During the residence of Mr. Hoare, this house was the scene of meetings for slave-abolition abroad, and for the improvement of the condition of the poor at home ; his drawing-room was also a rendezvous for men of letters. Among his visitors were Wilberforce, Canning, Brougham and Wellington ; Campbell, Scott, Byron, Wordsworth, Edward Irving and Coleridge, who drove over from Highgate in Dr. Gilman's gig ; Hannah More, Mrs. Barbauld from Church Row, Mrs. Siddons from Judge's Walk, and Joanna Baillie from her neighbouring house on Windmill Hill—these last two ladies being respectively playwright and chief actress in the successful drama of that day. George Crabbe the poet, could not indeed be counted a visitor at the hospitable Heath House so much as a resident family friend, who was inspired no less by the sweet air of that high-walled, spacious garden than by the quiet character of the domestic benevolence within-doors. In 1825 he wrote :—

Such is the state of the garden here in which I walk and read, that in a morning like this the smell of the flowers is fragrant beyond anything I ever perceived before . . . a Paradise of sweetness.

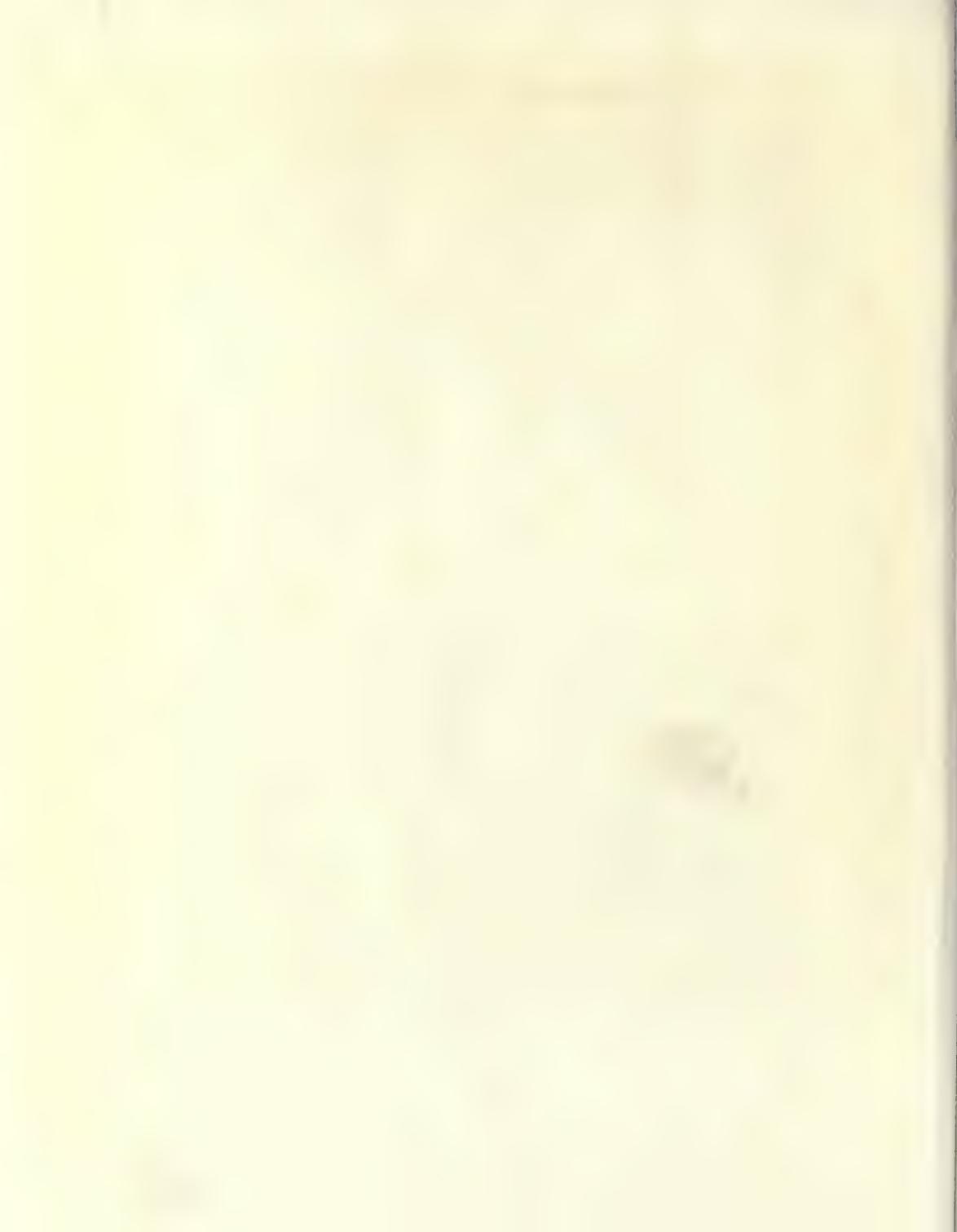
The ownership of Heath House, also of the neighbouring Hill House—which Mr. Hoare presented to his son as a wedding gift, has descended to the present Sir Samuel Hoare, fourth of that name, and



THE GIBBET TREES—NORTH END



"JACK STRAW'S CASTLE"



M.P. for Norwich. Heath House is at the present time in the occupation of Lord Iveagh; previously it was in that of Lord Glenesk (Sir Algernon Borthwick), proprietor of the *Morning Post*; and previously again in that of another proprietor of the same paper, Mr. Bockett, whose wife was a niece of Lord Chief Justice Erskine who lived for thirty years at the further end of the Heath.

NORTH END ROAD.—North End Road begins at the “Castle” Hotel, and is part of the ancient high road from London to Hendon. Walking down hill we find the trees thickly arched overhead; but from an old engraving we can see that they formerly grew on the right side only of this shady lane, *i.e.*, at the top of an immense bank which skirts the grounds of Pitt House. On the left side of this avenue, on a portion of the Heath—which has grown smaller by the incessant encroachment of houses—stood a magnificent pair of elms known as the “Two Sisters,” which were used as the hangman’s trees. The “Two Sisters” held between them a chain from which, in May, 1673, hung the body of Jackson the highwayman, who suffered for a murder near this spot. As a delicate reminder to malefactors Jackson’s body was left suspended until it became a skeleton. One of these glorious elms outlived its unhappy associations, and remained standing until the end of the nineteenth century.

PITT HOUSE.—Pitt House, known in the eighteenth century as Wildwoods and North End Place, has now attained its due name of honour, for here once lived the

great statesman. It was during the retirement of the first Earl of Chatham, from 1766 to 1769, that he sought here perfect seclusion, owing to the diseased melancholy of his mind. This Prime Minister, who had previously infused his fiery energy into every department of the Government, now shut himself up in one room at Wildwoods, and refused to see any man, even causing his meals to be served through a hatchway, from which he was invisible ; the means for this arrangement still remain in the house. The King, however, saying that he could not do without him, forced his rough entrance into the bedchamber of this “great Commoner,” of whom Lord Macaulay said that “he made himself the first man in England, and England the first country in the world.”

A recent owner of this house, who bought it in 1899, was Sir Harold Harmsworth ; but the previous resident, one who was active for the public welfare, was Mr. Samuel Figgis. It was during Mr. Figgis’s time at Wildwoods that his neighbour, Sir Spencer Wells, died, and Golder’s Hill House and its grounds of unparalleled beauty were about to be sold to a builder. The time-honoured oaks and trees of every variety—the homes of nightingales, thrushes, and blackbirds—were to be cut down ; the velvet lawns, flower-gardens, meadows and orchards made into brickyards, desecrated by scaffold poles, and turned into terraces of small houses ! It was at this threatening moment, on the eve of the execution, June, 1898, that the master of Wildwoods opened his house for a meeting of

alarmed residents, whose object was to preserve the thirty-seven acres for Heath extension. Sir Henry Harben acted as chairman of the committee ; Mr. Brodie Hoare, M.P., was one of the chief supporters ; so also was a former friend of Heath extension, the Right Hon. G. Shaw-Lefevre. In forty-eight hours the purchase-money was guaranteed ; in a month it was paid. The writer remembers that in July a garden-party was given in aid of the funds, and that the amazing loveliness of Golder's Hill garden first broke upon the majority of the Hampstead residents then invited. On this occasion members of the Vestry voted £10,000, the London County Council £12,000 ; the Duke and Duchess of Westminster were present, contributing £500 ; and many public bodies, as well as private persons, subscribed generous sums, thus completing the necessary amount. The first purpose for which the house was used was that of a convalescent home for the invalided soldiers from South Africa, after which it was devoted to the use of the general public.

GOLDER'S HILL.—The original building which stood in Golder's Hill garden, was very different in appearance from the present one. It was altered and enlarged at various times spreading over a century and a half ; and in 1875, when Sir Spencer Wells bought it, his architect modernised it, and transformed its appearance completely.

DR. AKENSIDÉ.—It was in the year 1748 that the Hon. Jeremiah Dyson, the generous friend of Mark Akenside, purchased the house for the doctor-poet's

use. Mr. Dyson, ever seeking to advance the interests of this handsome, proud and unpopular man, introduced him as medical attendant at the Pump Room of the Hampstead Wells where, however, he only offended persons of distinction by his patronising and dictatorial manner, which may perhaps have been more suited to his surroundings when, three years later, he gave up trying to practise at Hampstead, and went to reside as physician at St. Thomas's Hospital. Meanwhile, however, living among the glories of Golder's Hill, its chestnuts, its beeches and ash-trees, its silver birches of exquisite delicacy, its fruit-trees in full fairy blossom, Akenside, if there had been much good in the man, ought to have become a truer poet. Soothed by the sight of the green, sloping lawns, gladdened by the songs of a hundred different birds, he would have shown signs of greatness, instead of remaining a "tame genius," as Horace Walpole described him. Certainly he wrote verse, and a publisher gave him £120 for his work entitled "The Pleasures of Imagination"—a poem which exercises our imagination in trying to find any pleasure in it. Also he composed an ode to himself as the most interesting object in the Golder's Hill garden.

My musing footsteps rove
Round the cool orchard or the sunny lawn.

My weary lungs thy healing gale,
The balmy west, or the fresh north, inhale, etc.

But how could the lowly scent of the honeysuckle,
or the exultation of the soaring skylark have their

meaning for a man who was filled with admiration of himself, and coldness to other people, including infidelity to his father! For, having received a University education at Leyden, Akenside returned to England, and, though constantly irritated at any imaginary lack of respect paid to himself, was able to snub and disown his father—a butcher at Newcastle, where Mark himself had been born in 1771.

The blackcap perched on the branches outside his Golder's Hill window sang a more manly song than this poet. The chaffinch, constructing her lichen-covered nest and supplying it with food, was providing a home by her own exertions, while her master was living in a house supplied by a friend, who also added £300 every year to supplement his income.

But while the rich city-merchants waxed wroth at the grand airs and intrusions of Akenside in their large Hampstead houses, the Golder's Hill water-lilies still kept their white faces upturned to the sky, and the moor-hen swam out from her nest in the reeds with her moor-chicks behind her, on their first voyage of discovery round the fish-pond. The kingfisher and wagtail, who lived near the water, also the warbler from her hanging nest in the reeds, were audience to this juvenile aquatic performance. The black aristocrats, cawing in the forked heights of the elm-trees, were engrossed in their own all-important affairs. There was an intensity of life in the great quiet garden, where were sheltered dells and distant views from between the thick foliage. Bright-eyed squirrels leaped from

branch to branch and collected their acorns and beech nuts ; wild rabbits darted unexpectedly across the long, winding paths. Near the house the air was laden with the perfume of roses, and far away the owls in their ivy-mantled trees, were lulled to their midday slumbers by the soothing monotony of ring-doves, from which neither the woodpeckers' laugh nor the jabber of the jay would awaken them. Here were ripe hips and haws for the redwing and the fieldfare to feed on ; for, despite the fidelity of the firs and the evergreens, the autumn must come, turning the maple and the tulip-tree to deep crimson, which the western sun set aflame before he disappeared behind Harrow Hill and its steeple.

Later in the eighteenth century this house is said to have been occupied by David Garrick ; it may have been when he paid his frequent visits to the " Bull and Bush " Inn, about the year 1760, that he fell in love with the place and made it his own.

" **BULL AND BUSH** " INN.—In the hamlet of North End stands the " Bull and Bush " Inn, the supposed date of which is 1645. For many years a farmhouse, it afterwards became the private residence of Hogarth, an interesting memorial of whom is the ring of aged yew-trees which are said to have been planted by the painter himself, but from the appearance of their age, they have shaded him by their branches. A garden-seat encircles the interior of this dark retreat, and it is a helpful spot in which to linger and reconstruct the scenes of the past. We look hence upon the lawn—

the necessary bowling-green of the eighteenth century—with its smooth, even surface ; and upon the red-tiled roof of the historic dining-room, rising amidst a forest of green branches. When Hogarth gave up this country house, it was adapted to the purposes of an inn, and was visited by Gainsborough and Sir Joshua Reynolds, David Garrick, Kean and Macready. In "Wine and Walnuts" Payne gives an account of an expedition, when some of these guests alighted from their drive at eight o'clock one morning in the early summer. It is still quite possible to repeat the experience a hundred and fifty years later ; the air is of almost the same purity and freshness, and an outdoor breakfast near the Heath the most exhilarating romance. While taking our new-laid eggs and coffee on the "Bull and Bush" lawn at that hour, there is very little to disillusion us as to the date ; the song of the bullfinch is the same as in the year 1759, and the sparrows make friendly overtures quite as unabashed in their motive in the reign of the fifth George as in that of the second.

Payne tells us that at the Club—

Sir Joshua was prevailed upon to make an idle day ; and that Gainsborough observed, "Reynolds has already entered into an engagement with me that the next time he plays truant it should be to take a trip to Hampstead. Let us go and pay court to the face of Dame Nature. . . . The old duchess is now wrapped in her robe of green, newly dyed, and I am for Hampstead."

Payne continues :—

My choice was to hear the remarks of two such rare geniuses in a ramble amidst the wild scenery of the Heath, and having arranged

our campaign, we parted early, that we might rise with the lark. . . .

We assembled at Garrick's on the Adelphi Terrace, according to agreement, and found the chariot already at the door. . . . Reynolds drew up as St. Paul's struck six, which we heard from the Thames. I was accommodated in Garrick's vehicle, with the mirth-inspiring Whitefoord. . . . Sterne was seated by the side of Sir Joshua. . . .

"They are planning some new streets out yonder," said (Beau) Bunbury, pointing across towards Marylebone with his whip.

"Confound them," said Garrick, "I wonder where these mad fellows intend to carry the town!" (In 1761 Tottenham Court was spoken of as a pleasant little village between St. Giles and Hampstead.)

"What a delightful little snuggery is this said Bull and Bush Inn!" observed Gainsborough, as he poured the new milk into his breakfast-cup. "Faith, there is cream upon it! . . . Look you, what a flock of them! (some twenty or thirty white geese had taken their flight from the Upper Heath towards the pond at North End) I verily took them for a flight of hungry curates in their white surplices, come to eat us up!"

"Fie," said Caleb Whitefoord, "how long is it since you were at church, Tom, not to know a parson from a goose?" . . .

Gainsborough, turning to Sterne, "Are you going to be dull because I lampooned the parsons, man? God forbid that I should speak disrespectfully of your cloth! I love a parson next to painting!"

But the asthmatic Sterne was not dull, he was almost choking with laughter.

When the two painters had strolled away together on the Heath, they stood charmed with the sight.

"There, Reynolds," said Gainsborough, "there, look along this dell; how richly it is wooded! I am no friend to enclosures, yet this picture composes well; yes, beautifully, intersected as it is. Look, Sir Joshua, how that sweep betwixt Hendon and Mill Hill reposes in dusky shade."

Early in the nineteenth century the "Bull and

Bush" entertained, among many other literati, William Hone, the antiquary, and Charles Lamb, who were one day wandering among the brushwood on the Heath near the back of the inn, denouncing the evils of snuff, and by heroic agreement threw away each one his snuff-box, after which they returned to their London homes wiser but melancholy men. Early next day Lamb was seen poking among the furze bushes, when Hone appeared walking in the same part of the Heath with eyes riveted on the ground, and with apologies and sadness offered his friend snuff from a paper packet bought this same morning.

STOW HOUSE.—At the back of the "Bull and Bush" Inn stands Stow House, which is said to have been occupied for a time by the historian. The interior of the building gives every indication of extreme old age, it is true; but if we are to believe that this is the original house, it is clear that the outer walls must have been entirely renewed. The industrious old chronicler spent most of his eighty years in his home next to Aldgate Pump, and was buried in 1605, in the church of St. Andrew Undershaft, Leadenhall Street, where a sedentary statue of him, wearing an Elizabethan ruff and wielding a gigantic quill pen, was proudly erected by his widow.

WYLD'S.—Following the path to the left, after leaving Stow House, we come to a quiet corner of the Heath, and to an ancient dwelling. Collins's—later in the century, Tooley's—Farm is in the present day a private residence, being bereft of its pastures, the more

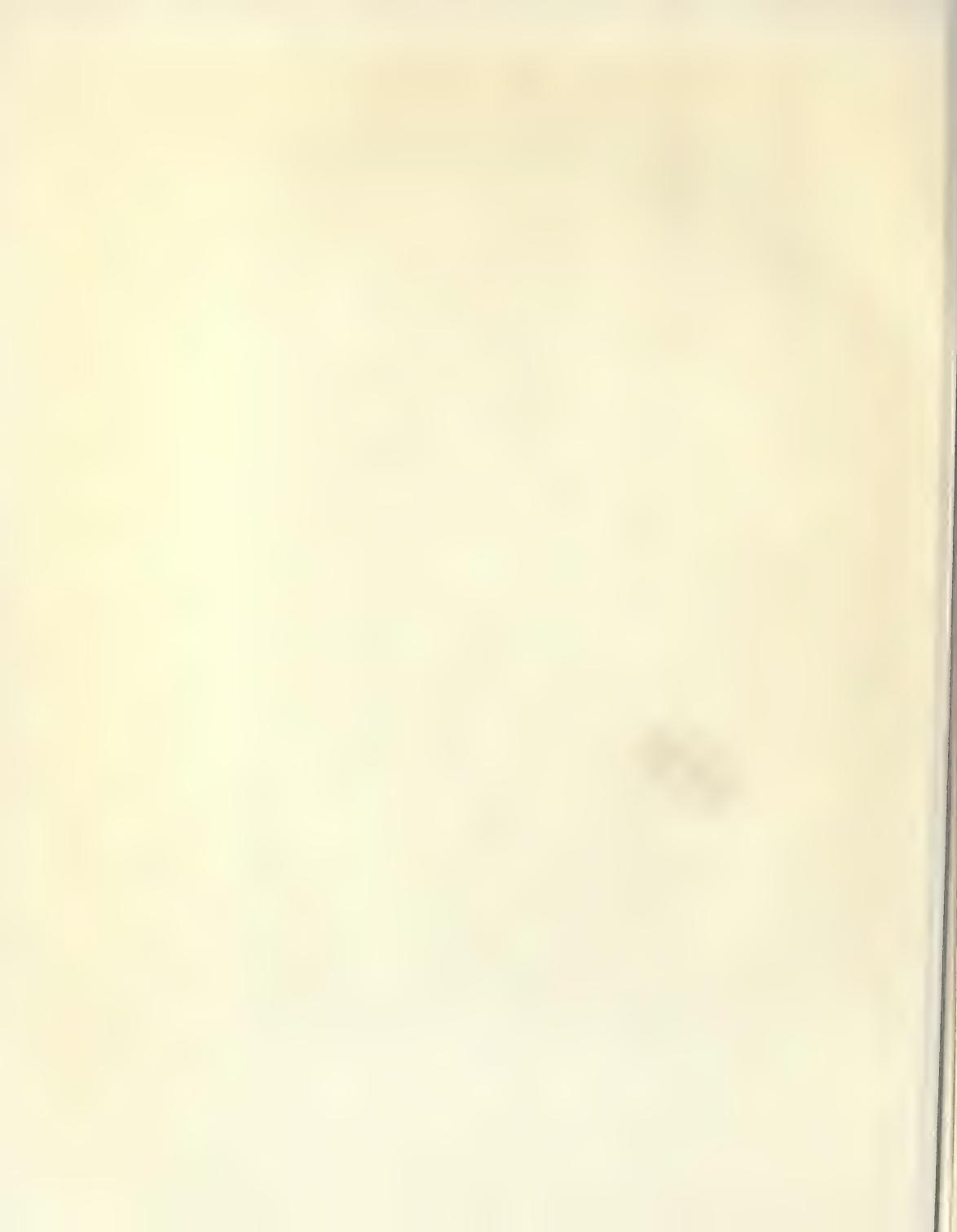
distant of which have become roads in the Garden Suburb, and one of which is named after the painter Linnell ; while those immediately adjacent to the farm-buildings are devoted to parklands for the benefit of the new population. Mr. Unwin, architect and expert, who now occupies this picturesque house—or unified collection of rooms, dating from different periods—says that the age of the original building defies calculation. The house has now resumed its mediæval name Wyldes, Wyldewood Corner having been mentioned in Doomsday Book, at which time the measurements of this estate were the same as in modern days. No explanation of the name can be traced other than the natural one of its wild condition, “on the fringe of Hamstede Manour.”

Like Chalcot (mentioned elsewhere) Wyldes was given by Henry VI. to his newly founded college at Eton. The two estates were previously the property of a Westminster conventional hospital—a relic of the time when all Hampstead belonged to the abbot : “ Chalcot and Wyldes lyinge and beinge in the parish of Hamstede, in the county of Middlesex, late belonging to the House of St. James in the Fields, which is situated in the village of Westminster, within the parish of St. Margarets.” This was the Lazar Spital, which stood amid such goodly land, so full of wild fowl, that, when Henry VIII. was king, the fourteen nuns, “ leprous maydes,” were sent flying, and the hospital, which had occupied this site since King John’s reign, was pulled down to build St. James’s Palace for Anne



WYLDÉS

*(From a Water-colour Drawing by George Barnard
in the North Collection, Hampstead Town Hall)*



Boleyn. In consideration of the loss of this lucrative land, Eton received some inferior property elsewhere.

These things are chronicled by the historian Stow, as having been entered in the Records of Eton, where not unnaturally an adage upgrew to the effect that—

Henricus Octavus
Took away more than he gave us.

WILLIAM BLAKE AND JOHN LINNELL.—Opposite to Stow House are some aged, weather-beaten cottages, where it is thought that William Blake stayed when John Linnell, for love of his character and conversation, importuned him to North End. Sometimes, it is clear, the painter-poet was received into Linnell's family at the neighbouring farmhouse, where the younger artist came to reside in order to paint the surrounding landscape no less than for the health of his little children.

Respecting Blake's protestations of gratitude for the numerous commissions which Linnell put into his hands—including the illustrations of Dante—Linnell assured him: “I do not want you to repay me: I am only too glad to be able to serve you.”

Linnell's residence at Hampstead was brought to a close by the incessant necessity of his going to town, where he retained his studio for portrait-painting. He was, doubtless, drawn to this place when he came hither to paint the portrait of Lord Mansfield's daughter. His first lodgings at North End were at Hope Cottage, in the year 1822; in the August of 1823 he stayed at

Collins's farmhouse, which he loved so well that he enlarged it, and in the year 1824 took a portion of it on lease, doubtless leaving the remaining part to the farmer who worked the land.

Linnell drew a most speaking picture of "William Blake and John Varley arguing," which is as fine an example of Linnell's power of portraiture at this period as are the five Hampstead scenes of his mastery of landscape. Other artists and men of letters—besides Varley the astrologer and water-colour painter—who met under that low oak-beamed ceiling, and sat round the large, open grate at Collins's farm, were Dr. Thornton the botanist, who, for his published work, spent thousands of pounds on illustrations; Morland and Flaxman, Richter and the poetic painter Samuel Palmer, who saw in Blake's drawings "such a mystic and dreamy glimmer as penetrates and kindles the inmost soul."

The exhilarating air of Hampstead proved always injurious to Blake, and caused him much pain—paradoxical as it may seem in a man who lived in atmosphere so pure and exalted as he in the sphere of his moral existence. Of this mountain-top seer it has been finely said :—

There is no trace of mental unsoundness in him, his enthusiasm simply denoted that the consciousness of Divine guidance, intermittent with most men, was with him habitual, and that this man breathed a spiritual atmosphere too rarified for ordinary mankind. His deliverances on art are, as was to be expected, the purest gospel of Idealism.¹

¹ Dr. Richard Garnett.

In the life of Samuel Palmer, a letter from his son graphically describes the intimacy between the two kindred souls. He writes :—

Fortunately for my father, Broad Street lay in Blake's way to Hampstead, and they often walked up to the village together ; the aged composer of the ' Songs of Innocence ' was a great favourite with the children, who revelled in those poems, and in his stories of the lovely spiritual things and beings which seemed to him so real and so near. Therefore, as the two friends neared the farm, a merry troop hurried out to meet them. . . . Here he might often be found, standing at the door to enjoy the summer air, playing with the children, or listening to the simple Scotch songs sung by the hostess. . . . Cold winter nights, when Blake was wrapped up in a shawl by Mrs. Linnell, and sent on his homeward way, with the servant, lantern in hand, lighting him across the heath to the main road.

THE SANDY ROAD.—By the light of Linnell's lantern we may follow, not up to the main road with Blake, but turn off along the Sandy Road to the north, and so arrive at the avenue of fir trees—no longer, alas ! its original length, for storms have swept over the wide-spreading west, to the death of too many of the trees since they were first planted there, in the year 1734, by Mr. Turner, who built the house here called The Firs, and who cut the Sandy Road hither.

Standing again on the high road, we see, between the tall, dark stems of the fir trees, distant water and hills far away, filmy and blue as a dream.

ERSKINE HOUSE.—Here, with its back to the distant view, we find Erskine House, once called Evergreen Hill, for Lord Chief Justice Erskine had a passion

for gardening, and employed his leisure from legal and political life in planting and digging. One of his customary remarks, on being found by a friend at work with his spade in his kitchen garden, was : "Here I am, enjoying my *otium cum dignitate*" (diggin' a tatty). But, in addition to digging potatoes, he also delighted to chop and fell trees, and once marked nine ancient elms as the victims of his hatchet, because they obstructed the view of Windsor Castle, far away up the river. His poet friend Cowper protested, and wrote lines in which the Muses expressed their indignation, after which the lives of the trees were spared at the eleventh hour.

Many interesting visitors found their way to this witty and genial host. Of these Edmund Burke was perhaps the most frequent, until the parting of these two Liberal comrades when the French Revolution frightened Burke into Conservatism. Lord Erskine relates :—

He came to see me not long before he died. "Come, Erskine," he said, holding out his hand, "let us forget all. I shall soon quit this stage, and wish to die in peace with everybody, especially you." I reciprocated the sentiment, and we took a turn round the grounds.

The political dinners given here by Baron Erskine were conspicuous for their gaiety, lively spirits, and excellent tales. Sir Samuel Romilly said :—

I dined there one day, at what might be called a great Opposition dinner ; nothing could be more innocent than the conversation, the topics were light and trifling, politics being hardly mentioned.

The Duke of Norfolk was of the party, with Lord Grenville and Lord Holland, besides many more nobles and gentlemen.

Lord Byron was also a friend ; Miss Burney, Hannah More, Miss Seward and Lady Morgan were his intimates.

His vivacity and fascination made Erskine the best of company, and his ancestry, for ten generations, ensured his courtesy and good-breeding. To one of his guests who complained of sleeplessness at night, Erskine suggested—at a date when the most aged and worn-out old men were employed as night-watchmen—“ You have nothing to do but to put on a watchman’s greatcoat, get into a watch-box, and you will be asleep in five minutes.”

Erskine’s sympathy for animals is well known, and the collection of creatures—including a friendly goose—which followed him about his garden, was a little unusual. One of his favourite dogs accompanied him to all his consultations when he was at the Bar. He wished to bring in a Parliamentary Bill for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. On one occasion he saw a brutal man on the Heath ill-treating his animal, and scolded him for so doing. The fellow replied surly : “ Can’t I do what I like with my own ? ” “ Well,” exclaimed the Chief Justice, “ so also can I. This stick is my own ” ; and he laid it about the man’s shoulders in a sound thrashing.

It was no doubt this vigorous, animated and noble-hearted sense of justice and compassion, as well as the necessity which existed so acutely in his earlier days of

making money for his young family, which had spurred him to the eloquent defence of Captain Baillie in the year 1779. The electric energy and success with which he opposed his father's friend and his own legal superior, Lord Mansfield, on that occasion sent the almost briefless young barrister away from the Court carrying sixty-seven retaining fees in his pocket.

Erskine House was connected with Kenwood Place by an underground passage, now blocked up, for it existed to give entrance to the large kitchen-garden which Erskine acquired from Lord Mansfield, and where he planted the holly hedge, twelve feet broad, existing in good condition to-day.

Erskine House is now used as a training home for young girls, and as a home of rest for workers, in whom Canon and Mrs. Barnett, near neighbours at St. Jude's Cottage, are interested.

It is quite possible to visit the interior of Erskine House, observing the coloured-glass window on the stairs, which bears Lord Erskine's arms, with the baron's coronet and the motto which he assumed: "Trial by Jury." The lofty room upstairs, with its five tall windows, which, with other improvements, he added to the previous small house, saw very many distinguished dinner-parties, including one at which King William IV. and the Duke of Wellington were present. Standing at the south windows in this room, we face the whole length of the Spaniard's Road.

Lord Erskine was no bird of passage in Hampstead: he lived here for thirty years, and a tablet to the

memory of Frances, his wife, between whom and himself there had been a lifelong devotion, and who had borne the burden of his early poverty with courage, is found on the wall of the church. The epitaph runs thus :—

Near this Place lies buried the Honble. Frances Erskine, the most faithful and the most affectionate of women. Her husband, Thomas, Lord Erskine, an inhabitant of this parish, raised this monument to her lamented memory. A.D. 1809.

Later in life Lord Erskine moved to another home in the south of England, but eventually died in his native Scotland in 1823, at the age of seventy-three. He had been born in Edinburgh in 1750, the youngest son of a large family, his father, poor and of ancient descent, being the tenth Earl of Buchan.

THE “ SPANIARD’S ” INN.—On the site of the “ Spaniard’s ” Inn, which is hiding round the corner, immediately behind Erskine House, there once stood an old toll-gate and lodge. These formed the entrance to the Bishop of London’s grounds, which extended from here to the other side of Highgate, where he possessed, during many generations, a castle and estate: the estate, being given up in 1755, was bought by Lord Chancellor Mansfield, to add to his late purchase of Kenwood Place. (The new owner liked to spell Caen Wood in this way, believing the origin to be the same as that of Kentish Town, which lay on the east of the land.) Thus we have the name of Bishop’s Wood which was followed, later, by Bishop’s Avenue: and

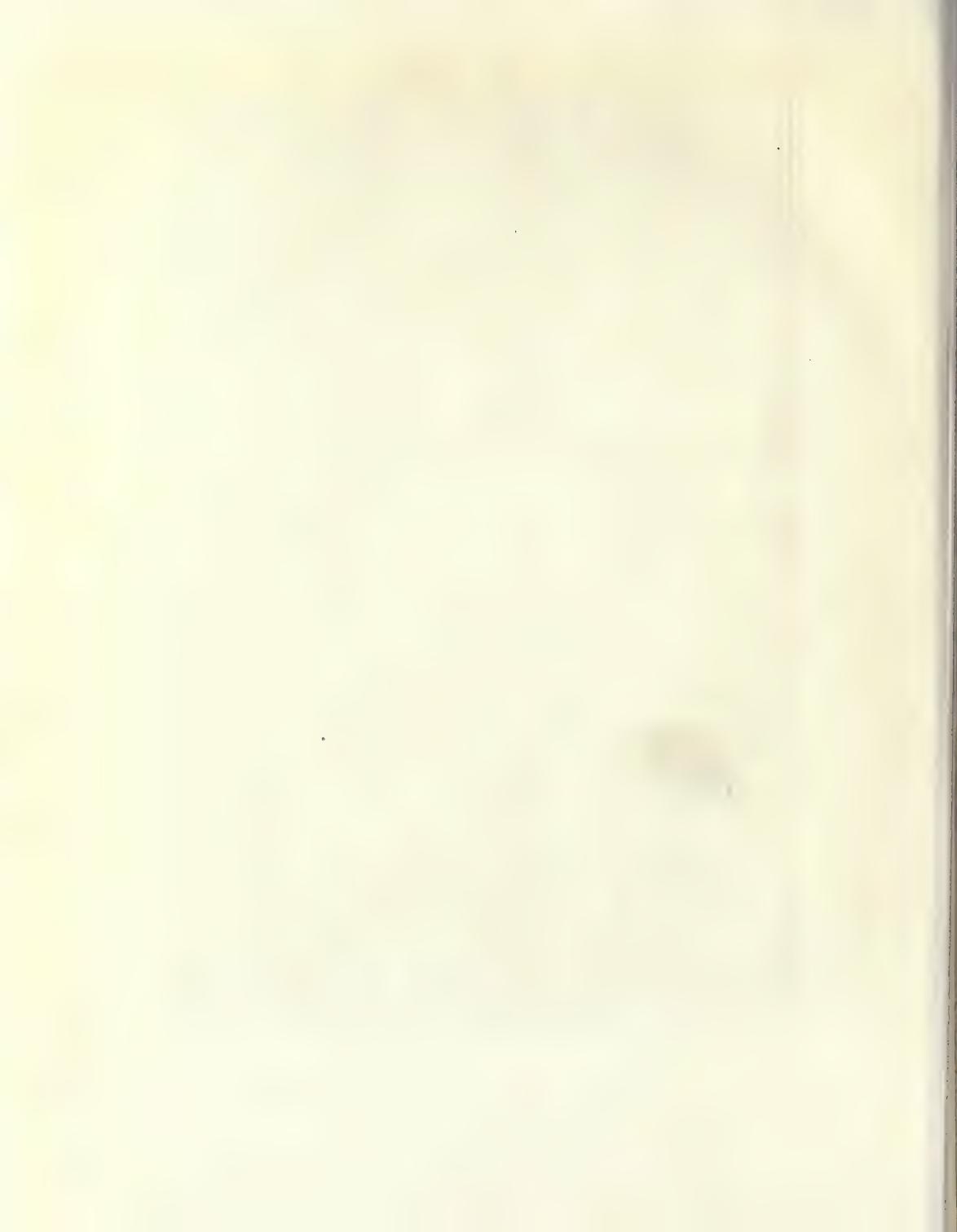
no doubt, though so long afterwards, suggested the name of the new Winnington Road.

The original host of this tavern was thought to have been the servant of the Spanish Ambassador. Another was Giles Thomas, a devoted old butler of Lord Mansfield, to whom the master owed a happy deliverance from the onslaughts of the Gordon Rioters. The incendiaries, having burnt down Lord Mansfield's house, containing many books, pictures and other treasures, in Bloomsbury Square, from which Lady Mansfield had just managed to escape, now directed their attention to his country house near the Heath, and were only frustrated in their designs by a clever ruse. Giles Thomas intercepted these ruffians, on their arrival near the tavern, with an invitation to refresh themselves gratis at his bar, before beginning their work on the Lord Chancellor's mansion. While they were availing themselves of this hospitality with exactly that result which was desired, the old servant procured from London a detachment of the Horse Guards, and to this formidable resistance the inebriated creatures quickly succumbed. Giles Thomas received warm gratitude from his old master—though whether any temperance society existed in his day, to offer its expressions of admiration, does not appear !

The inn is extremely old, and its date unknown : the upstairs parlour—where the Hampstead pilgrim may quite respectably take tea—is rich in oak beams, and the savour of age. The coffee-room below interestingly covers the boundary of two parishes : the closing



THE "SPANIARDS" INN



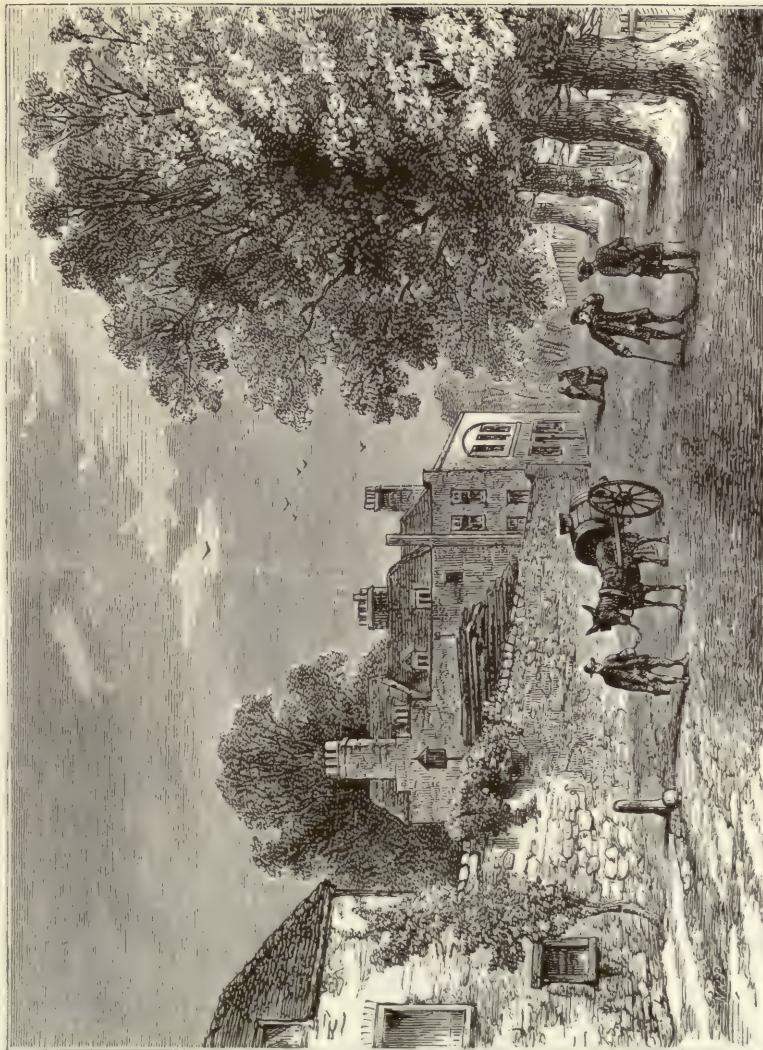
licence at the Hampstead end extended, until lately, to 12.30, while that of the Finchley end expired at 11 o'clock. It is not surprising to find that the fireplace in this comfortable old room is found in the Hampstead parish, and that the side door in this part of the house was a more popular exit than the front door into Finchley. The tea-gardens are memorialised by Dickens, for it was from here that he represented Mrs. Bardell being fetched away by the young man from Dodson and Fogg, and unsuspectingly conducted to the Fleet Prison. In the forty-fifth chapter of the "Pickwick Papers" we read:—

The party all walked forth in quest of a Hampstead stage; this was soon found, and in a couple of hours they arrived safely at the Spaniard tea-gardens. Before starting, the hostess remarked: "Well, Mr. Raddle, I am sure you ought to feel very much honoured at you and Tommy being the only gentlemen to escort so many ladies all the way to the Spaniard at Hampstead."

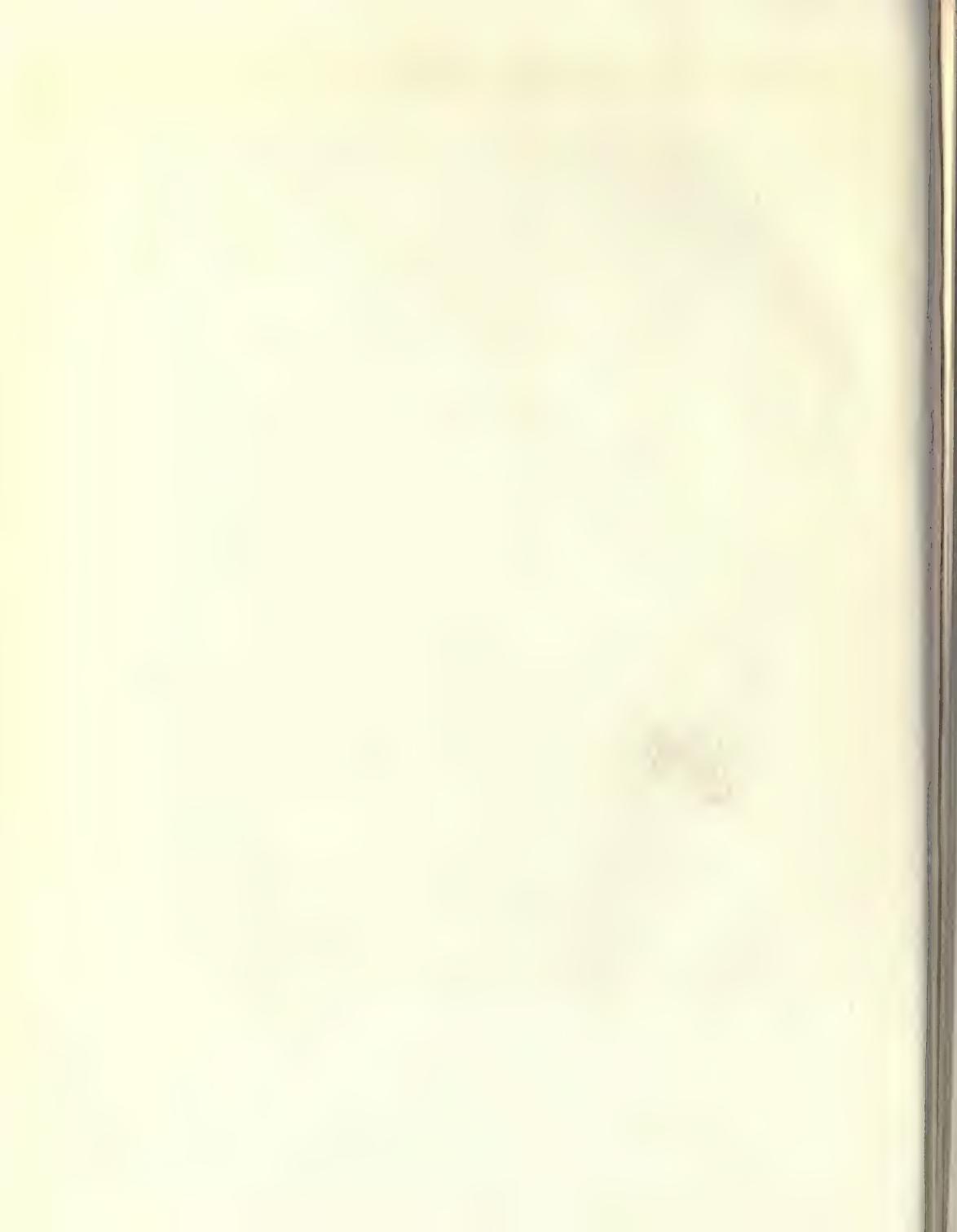
"UPPER FLASK" INN.—Returning to the pond, along the Spaniard's Road, we find the "Upper Flask" Inn. No remnant of old Hampstead is more arresting than the sight of the high, strong garden wall at the summit of Heath Street, with its ancient towering trees within. More than two hundred years ago, the inn was called the "Upper Bowling Green," but the velvet turf bowling-green has been diminished in size, a large portion of it now forming the lawn of the neighbouring garden, High Close. At the eastern extremity of the original grounds, a postern gate once gave entrance to foot passengers from London, who might

walk hither over the Kentish Town Fields and East Heath. This place was the summer resort of the forty-eight members of the Kit-Kat Club, which existed from the year 1700 to 1720 : these met in Westminster in the winter, but in fair weather sipped their ale in literary converse under an old mulberry tree here, propped up and remaining until modern days. Mr. Addison, Sir Richard Steele, Dr. Arbuthnot and Pope came by the stage and four. There were private coaches also arriving at the "Upper Flask" stables, for among the Kit-Kat were many nobles—Montague, Earl of Halifax, and the Earl of Burlington, both patrons of literature, the former "fed with dedications" ; the Duke of Somerset, first peer of the realm, with his fine flow of words and proud bearing ; the Dukes of Grafton and Manchester ; the Earl of Bath and the gouty old wit Vanbrugh. Representing law was Lord Somers, junior counsel for the defence of the Seven Bishops ; representing art, Godfrey Kneller, court portrait-painter ; representing drama, Mr. Congreve, the playwright. At the Club dinners at Westminster, learned discourse provided the members with mental food—a feast of wit and wisdom, to which Kit (Christopher) Kat, their celebrated cook, added his renowned pastry.

The "Upper Flask" Inn is associated in fiction with the unhappy Clarissa Harlowe, as introduced into Richardson's classic romance—published in 1748. It is quite amusing to see how American and other visitors will look upon the old place as the heroine's actual



THE "UPPER FLASK" INN (before 1760)



resort, so graphic were the griefs of that distressed maiden as to hold the imagination not only of the easily excited Haydon, who “read seventeen hours a day at ‘Clarissa,’ and held up the book so long” that he stopped the circulation in his arms, but of Lord Macaulay and his circle in India. Concerning the author, Thackeray wrote:—

Enraptured spinsters flung tea-leaves round him, and incensed him with the coffee-pot; matrons kissed the slippers they worked for him; a halo surrounded his nightcap.

After decoying Clarissa from her family, Lovelace writes to his friend Belford:—

The coach carried us to Hampstead, to the Upper Flask: there, in compliment to the nymphs, my beloved consented to alight and take a little repast: then home early to Kentish Town.

On making the alarming discovery that she is alone with Lovelace amid evil surroundings, she executes a hasty flight. Seating herself in a hackney coach, she presently arrives again at the “Upper Flask.” Lodging herself for a few days in a small house at Hampstead, she again sets forth in fear: “Is that the way to Hendon? The hackney coach, I am told, will carry passengers thither.” The novelist continues: “She indeed went to Hendon, passing by the sign of the Castle on the Heath.”

In the year 1750 the “Upper Flask” became the private house of Lady Charlotte Rich. A few years later it was bought by George Steevens, who possessed wit and a power of “smart repartee in conversation in which he was lively, varied and eloquent.” He was

considered a fine classical scholar at Eton and Cambridge, and was a man of great energy. During his residence at Hampstead he published his commentary on Shakespeare, to overlook the printing of which he started on foot every morning at four o'clock for the City : after satisfying himself concerning this, he would spend the remainder of the day at the booksellers' shops—the literary rendezvous of the period. George Steevens was a friend of Dr. Johnson, whom he outlived sixteen years, for Steevens died at the "Upper Flask" in the year 1800.

DR. JOHNSON AT HAMPSTEAD.—It has been sufficiently proved that the great lexicographer visited Steevens at the "Upper Flask," and it was here that the Doctor made that statement which Steevens published a few weeks after his death :—

I wrote the first seventy lines in *The Vanity of Human Wishes* in the course of one morning in that small house beyond the church. The whole number was composed before I threw a single couplet on paper.

PRIORY LODGE.—That "small house" has been enlarged, and become the present Priory Lodge, which, happily for the pilgrim's purpose, remains untenanted and in the care of a person who can point out the original Johnson rooms, also facilitating a ramble round the wild, well-wooded grounds which reach to the wall of the churchyard. From Boswell we learn :—

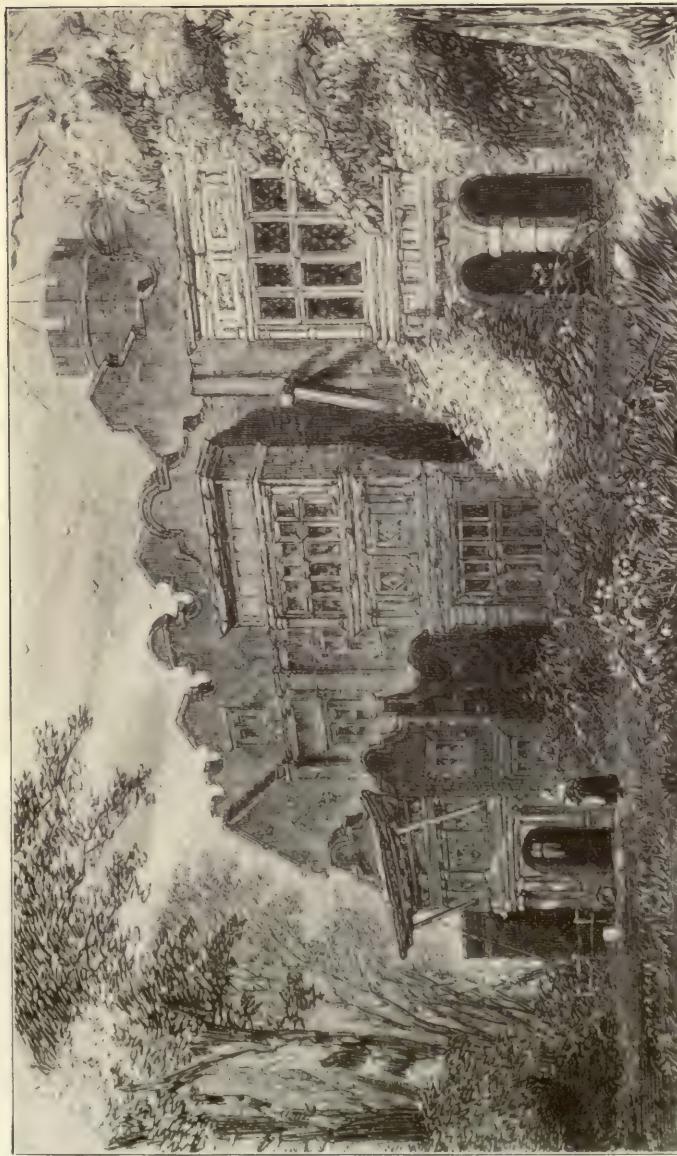
Mrs. Johnson, for the sake of country air, had lodgings in Hampstead, to which Johnson occasionally resorted, and there the greater part, if not the whole, of *The Vanity of Human Wishes* was written.

The fact that the doctor described their dwelling as the “last house in Frognal southward” does not disprove the identification, for in his day—1746—this was indeed true of Priory Lodge. The writer remembers that when she was a child the road terminated at this point, the lower end not being then cut. The land south of Frognal Lane still lay in lovely fields, rich in every variety of foliage. Artists came from afar to sketch the picturesque “Haunted Court”—Frognal Priory—which stood, buried in trees, not far from Priory Lodge.

FROGNAL PRIORY.—This house had every appearance of a romantic, forsaken ruin; it was Elizabethan in architecture, but, alas! not in age. Its late owner, a man of antiquarian tastes, had collected for its adornment many effective curiosities among which was a finely carved porch, brought from a Shropshire manor and dating from Jacobean days. The decaying place, called the Priory—it occupied the supposed site of a monastic house—possessed a smell which for ancestral mouldiness was in itself conclusive of anything! In the late afterglow of a June sunset we children expected, at every turn of the long corridors, to meet a shadowy figure in mediæval costume. The odour filled us with a delicious horror, and must have been worth a fortune to the woman who was proprietress of the ghost as well as of the gingerbeer stall, with its apples withered and wrinkled as her old face. This remarkable place was pulled down in 1876, when she of the apples, who had long been its exhibitor, proved immovable

until the Lord of the Manor used legal force to eject her.

Returning in thought to the "Upper Flask" Inn, it is important to inquire the reason for which its name became changed, in the eighteenth century, from "Bowling Green" to "Flask" Inn. This question, as we shall see, brings us to the interesting subject of the chalybeate wells, the discovery of which started a new epoch in the history of Hampstead, causing a popularity which developed the place to an unforeseen degree.



FROGNAL PRIORY



CHAPTER II

THE WELLS. FIRST PERIOD, PUMP ROOM IN WELL WALK

THE WELLS. SECOND PERIOD, PUMP ROOM IN WEATHERALL PLACE

AT the close of the year 1698, the Lord of the Hampstead Manor, at that time the Right Hon. Baptist Noel, Earl of Gainsborough, who was still a boy under the guardianship of his mother, the Countess Susannah Noel, made a grant of six acres of land to the poor of the parish. The east side of the Heath, where this ground lay, reached at that time nearly as far as the High Street, and it contained, among ponds and other waters, the newly discovered chalybeate spring. The trustees,¹ to whom the interests of the poor were in this matter confided, began by appointing a person to bottle the mineral waters at the two Hampstead inns, which were afterwards respectively named, in association with this fact, the “Upper” and “Lower Flask,” and to convey these waters to London for sale.

In the *Postman* for April 18 and 20 in the year 1700, the following announcement appeared :—

The Chalybeate Waters at Hampstead being of the same nature and equal in virtue with Tunbridge Wells and highly approved of

¹ There were fourteen trustees appointed in 1698 to guard the interests of the Wells Charity. One of their successors in the present day is Mr. George W. Potter, who has embodied his authentic knowledge on this subject in a book called “Hampstead Wells,” published in 1904, by Messrs. George Bell & Sons.

by the most eminent physicians of the College, are by direction of the Trustees of the Wells aforesaid, for the conveniency of those who yearly drink of them in London, carefully bottled up in flasks and sent to Mr. Phelps, Apothecary, at the Eagle and Child in Fleet St. every morning at the rate of 3d per flask, and if any person desires to have them brought to their own houses, they will be conveyed to them upon their leaving a note at Mr. Phelps' aforesaid at 1d more, and, to prevent any person being imposed upon, the true waters are nowhere else to be procured unless they are sent for to the Wells at Hampstead, and the said Mr. Phelps to prevent counterfeits hath ordered his servants to deliver to each person who comes for any of the waters aforesaid, a sealed ticket viz : a wolf rampant with seven crosslets. Note ! the messengers that come for the waters must take care to return the flasks daily.

In the following year the trustees, in pursuit of a larger scheme, advertised the six acres of land in a London paper, and eventually let it on a lease of twenty-one years to a certain John Duffield, who undertook to pay a yearly rental of £50 for its use, and who promptly set to work to establish a health and pleasure resort, similar to the already successful spas at Tunbridge Wells, Bath, and Scarborough.

The Pump Room was first erected, and adjoining it under the same roof was the Assembly Room for concerts, card-playing and dancing ; at the back of this lay the necessary bowling green of the period and the pleasure gardens containing a little lake and island. These covered the part now appropriately known as Gainsborough Gardens. The site of the Pump and Assembly Rooms, which together were known as the Long Room, is indicated approximately by the tablet on the modern house called " Wellside," built in 1892.

The fountain of chalybeate water on the opposite, *i.e.* the north, side of Well Walk appears now as a modern drinking-fountain with an inscription.

Dr. Gibbon, a medical practitioner in Hampstead at the beginning of the eighteenth century, began at this time, whether spontaneously or by suggestion of those directly interested, to sound the praises of the chalybeate waters, and to show forth their salutary advantages : patients and visitors of the most distinguished kind began to flock hither. It quickly became necessary to provide accommodation for these people, and to that end many lightly constructed dwellings were rapidly erected in addition to the taverns already in use—the “Upper Flask,” the “Lower Flask,” “Jack Straw’s Castle,” the “Bull and Bush” and the “Green Man,” which stood but a stone’s throw from the Pump and Assembly Rooms. Small wooden cottages with green fences sprang up on the east side of the Heath and Squire’s Mount, also on the south side of the Heath and in the Vale of Health. This portion of the Heath received its name at this time as indicating the advantages of the Wells and surrounding neighbourhood.

By the year 1701, the spa project was well afloat, and for the entertainment of visitors we find the following provision. In very odd print and astonishing spelling the *Postman* announces :—

At Hampstead Wells, on Monday next being the 18th of this instant August will be performed a Consort of bothe vocal and instrumental Musick with some particular performance of both

kinds by the best masters, to begin at 10 o'clock precisely. Tickets will be delivered at the Wells for 1s per ticket and dancing in the afternoon for 6d per ticket to be delivered as before.

Exactly at 11 o'clock of the forenoon will be performed a consort, and at the request of several gentlemen, Jemmy Bowen will perform several songs and particular performances on the violin by two several masters. Tickets to be had at the Wells and at St. Stephen's coffee House in King St. Bloomsbury at 1s per ticket.

The *London Post* in 1702, tells that there will be "Entertainments on the violin 11 o'k rain or fair," and that the evening performances "begin at 5 o'k for the conveniency of gentlemen returning"; for, many visitors as there were who took up their residence near the Wells for the season, there were still many who came and went daily from London. We hear nothing of ladies returning—possibly a too adventurous undertaking after dark for creatures wearing no swords and hobbling in high heels as small round the bottom as a sixpenny piece, while their farthingales, less dangerous if absurd and inconvenient, described a circle of seventeen feet in width. In 1718 the management of the Wells supplied a sufficient guard, well armed, to attend the company with torches and links; and no doubt with plenty of tallow smell and bad smoke. As late as 1775 Parliament passed an Act for lighting the village with oil lamps; for the institution of a watchman; and for a patrol after dark between Hampstead and London. In the early part of the century they were content with suggestive prevention against highway tragedies, and to this end pointedly displayed the dead body of a murderer as a kind of

human scarecrow in the Hampstead High Road. For some very crude manners were rife at this time, despite the picturesque appearance of silk stockings and shoe-buckles, periwigs and cocked hats, lace ruffles and snuff-boxes. The ladies, with their powdered hair, black patches and ceremonious curtseys, added to their feminine fascinations a select vocabulary of oaths, and chose extraordinary topics for discussion both in writing and conversing with men. The affectation of sentiment belonging to those days was fairly well equalled by their coarseness and immorality.

In 1709 *The Tatler* contained an article by Richard Steele condemning the gambling at the raffling-shops near the Wells ; indeed the increasing degradation of this pleasure resort expressed itself in both covert and glaring ways. In the same year Rev. Zechariah Merrell, a Presbyterian minister who had settled in Hampstead early in Queen Anne's reign, published a sermon on the reformation of manners : and Bishop Butler, while living at Vane House thirty years later, was said " to be of a melancholy countenance being grieved by what seemed to him the hopeless irreligion of his day."

In a play by Baker, which was acted in London at this time, the charms of the new spa are referred to by Arabella, who has danced all night at the Wells, received presents at the raffling-shops, and walked in " Caen Wood with a man of wit." Reserving the crowning joy for the last she finally adds that she is five or six miles from her husband and that " marriage

were a happy state could one be always thus safely divided."

At Mother Hough's, visitors of the commoner sort had their fortunes told. This woman practised witchcraft. Her doings were condemned as illegal, her profession was stopped, and herself despatched in company with the many swindlers, professional gamblers and other delightful characters, who now infested the neighbourhood, finally putting to flight the better sort of visitors at the spa. Indeed, early in the seventeen-twenties the card-cheating which came under the notice of official inspectors ended in the closing of the gaming-tables, and the indecorous behaviour of pleasure-seekers from the city drove away the polite inhabitants of Hampstead, whose regular subscriptions and season-tickets for the Wells, embracing all its resources, were the chief support of the spa undertaking. Persons of refinement and education, residing in good houses in the neighbourhood, preferred now the more intellectual society at the "Upper Flask" Tavern, and the destroyers of their peace appeared to have transferred their operations to Belsize House, which had been recently opened to the public as a place of entertainment.

These changes were of course gradual, and we still find announcements at the "Spaw," under date of October, 1723, for country dances in the Long Room and races on the horse-course; an old announcement stating that on the "New course at Hampstead Wells on the 3rd day of October next a plate of five

guineas is to be run for by any Galloway not exceeding thirteen hands." "A cart-horse harness run" also is announced for the same date.

In the year 1722, invalids at the Wells, encouraged by Dr. Gibbon and other practitioners, might still drink of the mineral spring. Indeed, two interesting patients at this time were Alexander Pope and his intimate companion John Gay, author of the "Beggar's Opera," "The Wife of Bath," and many other plays and poems. Jarvis, the court portrait-painter to George II., also the translator of "Don Quixote," wrote to Dean Swift concerning their mutual friend Pope, who was a lifelong sufferer, that the latter, pale and sickly, was "as well as one could expect in a carcase so crazy." Pope was visiting Hampstead, having by order of Dr. Arbuthnot brought hither John Gay, who, two years previously, had published his poems, and had thus made a thousand pounds, which he unhappily put into the South Sea Scheme. When the Bubble burst, the young poet was again penniless; his fluctuating spirits dropped to their lowest ebb, and his health was impaired with his fortunes. Pope, who had made the same mistake by investing in this affair himself, was silent concerning his own financial and other afflictions, while he restored Gay's health and courage, with the result that during this visit to Hampstead Gay wrote his tragedy "The Captive." A tragic comedy indeed it was which befell the absent-minded poet when, at Leicester House, he was about to read this work to Caroline, Princess of Wales, and,

catching his foot in a stool, measured his length with a thud on the floor, knocking down a screen by his fall ; and it is not surprising to find in the eighteenth century, when elegance did duty for refinement, that this little accident made the subject of it the laughing-stock of the Town. The play, however, was produced at Drury Lane theatre by the princess's request and she attended the performance.

The poet's first presentation to her Royal Highness had probably been made when he was acting as secretary to the Duke of Clarendon, for this nobleman went as ambassador to the Court of Hanover towards the close of Queen Anne's reign in 1714, and Gay would there become known to the future royalties of England. Caroline of Anspach was soon to become Princess of Wales and, as such, the first lady in England, there being no Queen during George the First's reign.¹ Three years after the coronation of George the First, his quarrel with his son, and his son's wife Caroline, came to an open rupture and thus the Prince and Princess of Wales, being forbidden at the Court of St. James's, set up a rival and more interesting circle of their own at Leicester House. It pleased Caroline to encourage men of letters ; she liked to hear theological and philosophical disputes ; for this purpose she held weekly meetings at her house in Leicester Fields, at which were to be found Bishop Butler, Dr. Samuel Clarke,

¹ When George of Hanover succeeded to the English throne Sophy Dorothea of Celle was left imprisoned in the castle of Ahlden, where she had already spent fifteen years and was still to remain, a few of her women about her and a limit laid upon her movements, until at the end of thirty years she died an uncrowned Queen, a few months before the end of her husband's reign in this country.

William Whiston, Arbuthnot, Pope and John Gay. These things were scoffed at as an affectation of learning ; it was ungraciously said that neither she nor themselves understood what they were talking about. But, even if this were the case, it was a less gross form of amusement than any which his Majesty employed, and who kindly called Caroline “ *cette diablesse, Madame la Princesse.* ”

At Leicester House John Gay paid attention to Mrs. Howard, the Prince’s favourite, wrote his famous book of fables for the instruction of the young Duke of Cumberland, and felt fairly sure that his provision was thus secured for future years when the Prince of Wales should succeed to the throne. But nothing more was offered him after the accession in 1727 than the post of gentleman-usher to Princess Louisa, and this, on the advice of his friends, he declined as being beneath his dignity. This refusal put an end, of course, to all hopes of royal salaries ; but Gay, who was befriended to an unlimited degree by the Duchess of Queensberry, daughter of his former patron the Duke of Clarendon, and had spent half his time with her and her husband, now took up his abode with them entirely. The disappointment of Court patronage was soon forgotten in the success of the play which he immediately wrote. “ *The Beggar’s Opera* ” was immensely popular, the author was hugely elated ; it was performed in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The exuberant poet produced moreover a sequel to it, in which Sir Robert Walpole, who had

been already satirised in the "Beggar's Opera" saw himself now treated to an even more abusive style of portraiture in "Polly." Although characterisation in the drama was in vogue at the time, it had been overdone in this instance, and Sir Robert Walpole, being a minister of the Crown, requested the Lord Chamberlain to have Gay's impudence suppressed. This play was consequently removed from the stage, and the author's next endeavour was to get it printed for publication. In this he was supported by the Duchess of Queensberry, who was delighted to collect funds on Gay's behalf for the purpose. It was a daring act even for this fearless and independent young noblewoman, seeing that the prohibition came from the King; moreover, she made all her friends at Court, including the royal servants, contribute to the subscription list. George and Queen Caroline talked it over together, and a letter was sent to Burlington House informing the duchess of her dismissal from the royal circle; to which she replied with all her characteristic truthfulness, alarming the chamberlain whose business it was to carry the answer to St. James's.

Concerning the kindness of this young duke and duchess to John Gay, Pope relates how they would take care of their protégé's purse as well as of his person, only allowing "this bad manager" as much as they thought fit to dole out to him. He wrote to Swift: "The duchess is a more severe check than ever you were . . . you see by this that those that are most generous of their own can be most covetous for



JOHN GAY



ALEXANDER POPE



others." All the needs of the "good honest simple-minded childish poet" were supplied by the hospitality which was bestowed on him at whichever of the splendid ducal seats his young benefactors occupied in turn, and to which he accompanied them in the family travelling-coach. Her Grace was only twenty-two years old when she paid Gay's expenses to recuperate at Hampstead; having just attained her twentieth year on her marriage day, she lived with the "Good Q." nearly sixty years. Gay's constant correspondence with Dean Swift brought about a friendship between that divine and the duchess, whom Swift had known as a child. She repeatedly wrote to invite him to leave his hated exile in Dublin and pay her a long visit, during which she herself would attend to his gout, and allow him to talk as much nonsense as pleased him, "for there is some sense in nonsense when it is spoken on purpose." Her letters were interpolated with Gay's in a kind of duet, and when she takes up the pen after an interval of John Gay's she remarks to the dean, "Mr. Gay is peevish that I spell and write ill." Gay said in a private letter to Swift, "To the lady I live with I owe my life and fortune, she has so much goodness, virtue, and generosity I have pleasure in obeying her." And when he was ill . . . "The duke and duchess, if I had been their nearest relation and dearest friend, could not have treated me with more constant attendance." Swift wrote at one time to Pope that her Grace "seems a person of most excellent sense and spirit and that he

never envied poor Gay for anything half so much as for being domestic friend to such a lady."

At the close of the year 1732, ten years after Pope had nursed Gay back to life at the Hampstead Wells, the poet of Twickenham has to write to Dublin with the tidings of Gay's unexpected death. "In every friend we lose a part of ourselves, and the best part," he says; to which the dean less nobly replies, "I would endeavour to comfort myself upon the loss of friends as I do upon the loss of money, by turning to my account-book and seeing whether I have enough left for my support." The duchess at this time, when thirty-two years old, said, "If I have any good in me I certainly learned it of my poor friend," Gay.

John Gay was buried in Westminster Abbey, where a monument to his memory was erected by his many patrons and friends, December 4, 1732.

But now to return to Hampstead early in the seventeen-twenties and observe the disappearance of the wells premises. First the raffling-shops, where the lotteries were held, had been condemned as illegal and were pulled down. These were replaced later by the row of residential houses which stand there still in this twentieth century; they reached from the "Wells" Tavern as far as the Long Room, the last of them being attached to the west wall of that building. Mr. Potter, as an expert examining these erections, believes them to have been built soon after 1730.

Another attraction connected with the spa had been Sion Chapel, a place licensed for marriages after the

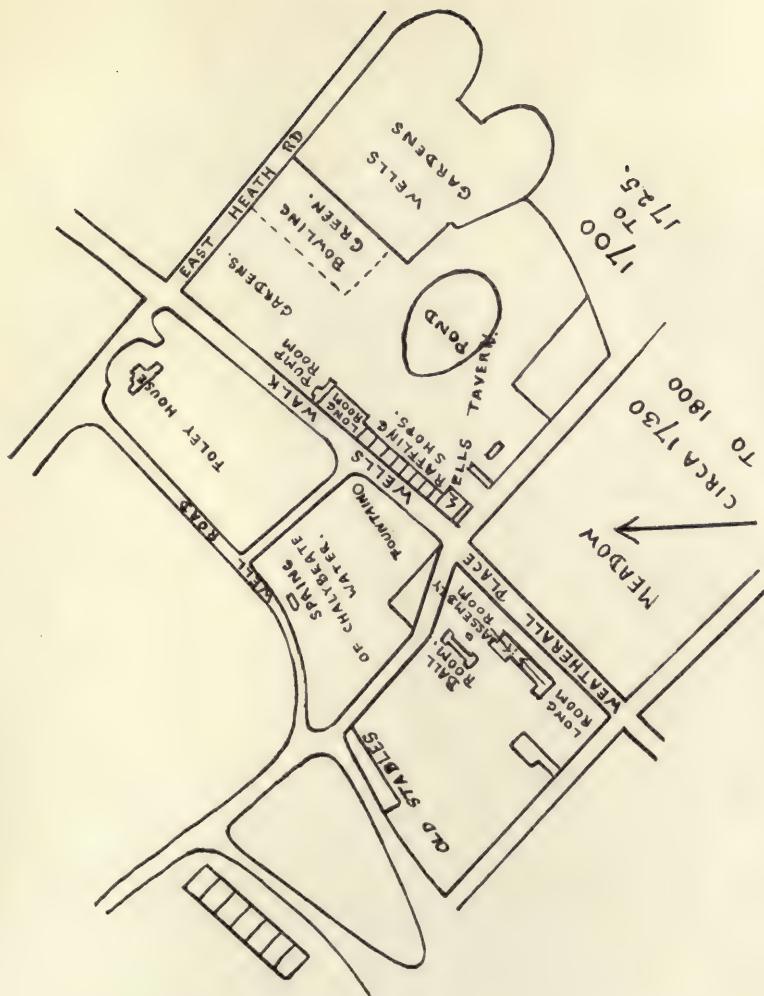
same manner as that in the Fleet Prison a little later in the century. The matrimonial fees at Sion Chapel were the property of the innkeeper, and the nuptial pairs who invited their guests to breakfast in the tavern or in its tea-gardens were thus exempt from the five shillings otherwise demanded for the ecclesiastical dues. We are asked to believe that "persons of the best fashion" chose this place for their weddings, indeed that the Quality themselves patronised this Arcadian setting for the sacred ceremony. It is well to observe quite distinctly, in the face of confusions which afterwards arose, that Sion Chapel was demolished, so completely swept away, indeed, that the site has never been identified notwithstanding many efforts to fix it. It could not have stood further off than the tea-gardens of the "Green Man" which in 1721 was called the "Whitestone" Inn. The "Green Man" stood until 1849 when it was pulled down, rebuilt and named the "Wells" Tavern.

The last of the spa buildings to disappear was the Long Room which indeed remained until 1882, but was completely changed in its uses. The second lessee of the Gainsborough grant land was Joseph Rous, the successor of John Duffield, whose original tenancy of twenty-one years had now expired. Joseph Rous converted the combined Pump and Assembly Rooms, together known as the Long Room, into an episcopal chapel in 1725; a bell was placed in a tiny belfry newly erected on the roof; while pews, altar with valuable altar-plate, and an organ were added within. The

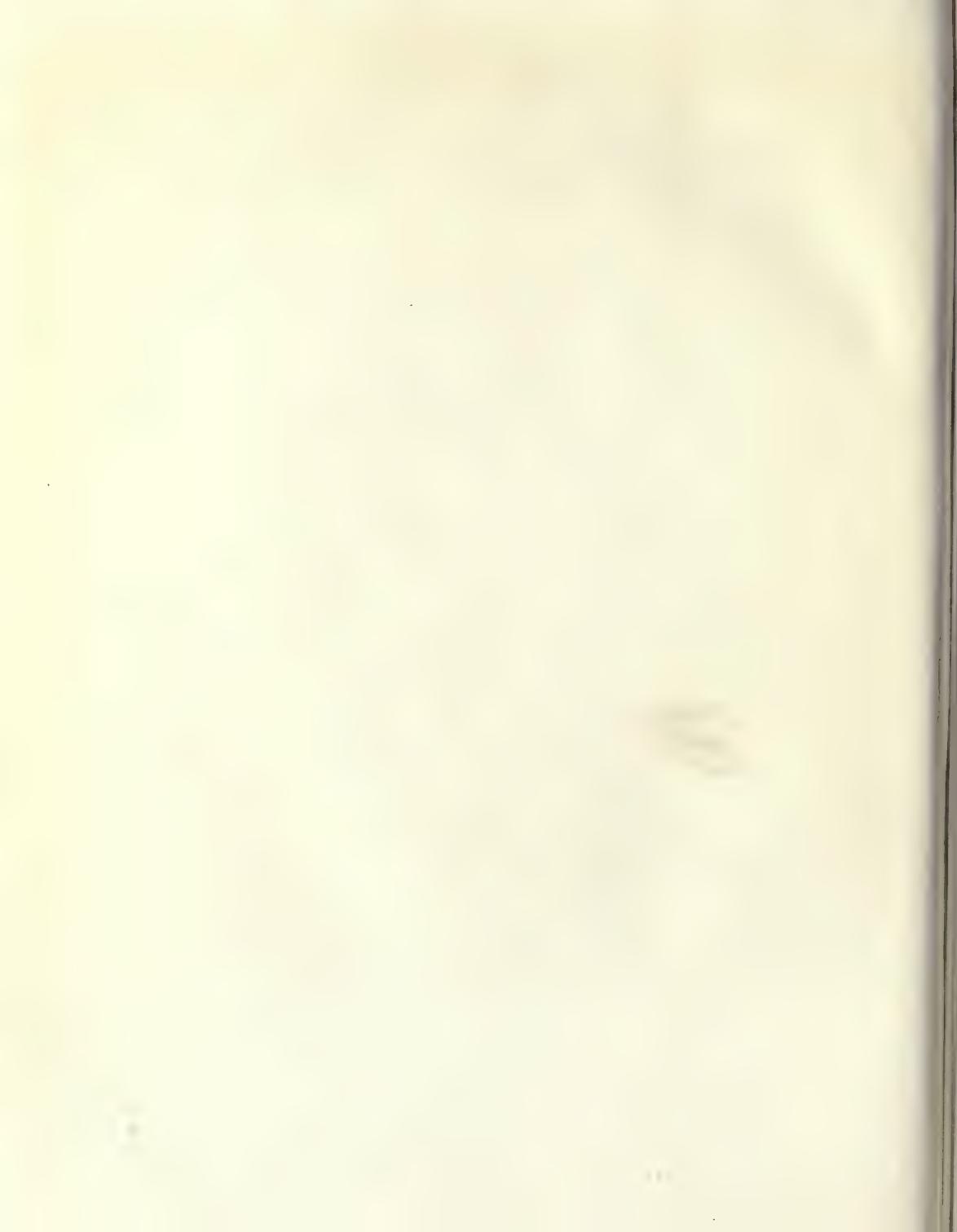
edifice measured ninety feet in length, sixty for the Assembly and thirty for the Pump Room: galleries were also now added, on the north and south sides and west end, affording in all, seats for a thousand people. In 1745, when the too small and very decayed parish church was pulled down, the vicar of Hampstead made use of this commodious place, which was the only other Church of England building in the village. Here, then, the Rev. Langhorne Warren and his congregation were glad to worship, and to pay fifty pounds a year for the convenience it afforded them until their own church was rebuilt and opened, 1747. The Well Walk Episcopal Chapel was licensed for worship, but was never consecrated; it served, under a series of good incumbents,¹ as chapel of ease to the Parish Church for ninety-three years until St. John's proprietary chapel in Downshire Hill was built, 1818, after which the Well Walk Episcopal Chapel continued a prosperous course of its own. The increase of residents,² following on the chalybeate fame which Hampstead had acquired, resulted in a large congregation of rich and respectable people who worshipped in Well Walk until 1852. Commencing their project in 1849, they built for themselves the dignified edifice of Christ Church, next to Hampstead Square, on the summit of Squire's Mount. This enterprise required special permission from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, from the Bishop of London, and from

¹ The official parsonage was one of the old houses still standing in Elm Row.

² Hampstead population in 1801 had been 4,343; the census of 1841 gives 10,093; in 1851 it was 12,000.



THE WELLS FIRST AND SECOND PERIODS



the vicar of Hampstead : it was the first new church in the parish, and might only, under the law of that date, hold the position of a district chapelry, until after 1856, when Lord Blandford's Bill was passed. It was then made independent of the old mother church, and an ecclesiastical district, amounting to a parish, was assigned to it. One of the vicars of Christ Church, Dr. Pelham, was afterwards preferred to the bishopric of Norwich : and a subsequent vicar, the Rev. E. Bickersteth, who developed the life and work of Christ Church for thirty years, enlarging the church and school premises, was afterwards made Bishop of Exeter.

To return to the Well Walk Chapel, which had been the cradle of the spiritual growth of Christ Church, we find that, after the coming and going of the spa visitors had ceased, a good class of residents began to settle in Hampstead. These were City bankers, stock-brokers, merchants—philanthropic, cultured, artistic and literary people of various kinds. We may recall some of the names of the supporters of the Episcopal Chapel and those who made the effort to erect the larger edifice of Christ Church. The family of the Pryors, for instance, lived at a large house, on the East Heath, opposite the end of Well Walk, a very short distance from the chapel. Residing near “Jack Straw's Castle” were Mr. John Gurney Hoare, trustee, and Mr. Joseph Hoare, treasurer, of the new church : another treasurer was Mr. Prance, of Froginal House, who was a generous contributor to this as to every

other good object—and he was the donor of the organ : Captain Sir Edward Parry, the Arctic explorer, who lived at the further end of the Spaniard's Road, close to "The Firs"; Sir Edward Parry's house is now inhabited by the Rev. Canon and Mrs. Barnett, of St. Jude's in the east of London. Were there space to speak of them in fuller detail, it would be seen that Hampstead acquired residents of whom she is justly proud, and whose memory is still held in honour.

Mr. Potter tells us that, when he attended the chapel in 1842, the time of his boyhood—the Rev. Archdeacon Hankinson being then the incumbent—he liked to sit in the south gallery, from which he could enjoy a fine view of those grounds which had previously been the pleasure-gardens of the spa buildings, but which at the time he speaks of formed the garden of the last house of the row. Having an ornamental bay window and porch the house may easily be recognised, and from its position a corresponding sight of the Long Room chapel may be correctly fixed, namely, the entrance to Gainsborough Gardens. Mr Potter's view of the old pond with a boat upon it, and boat-house beside it, enlivened his young imagination and considerably relieved the tedium of the sermon—always one hour long with a prospect of two more services to follow on the same Sunday. The enclosed shrubbery and lawn of the present Gainsborough Gardens gives an excellent idea of where the pond lay.

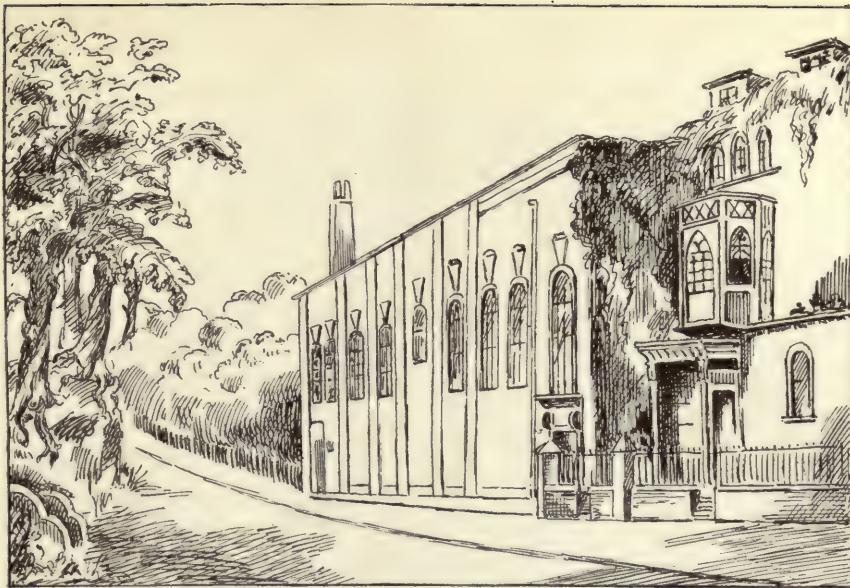
When the congregation moved to their newly built Christ Church, the chapel in Well Walk became the

property of the Presbyterians, being an improvement on the little place in Perrin's Court where they had hitherto assembled. In 1861 it was forsaken by them in favour of the church which they built in the High Street; and the old Long Room, sanctified by a hundred and thirty-five years of Divine worship, reverted again to a secular life. The pulpit, pews, organ and altar all being cleared away, it was now found useful as a Drill Hall to the local volunteers. During some reconstruction and alterations, necessary to adapt the place to its new purpose, the excavations disclosed a recess with remains of basin and pipes which had conducted the chalybeate water from the fountain on the north side of Well Walk to the Pump Room. A dozen years later again, when the walls of the Drill Hall were being scraped, nine mural paintings of classic figures, Clio, Euterpe, and the other seven Muses whose names are illegible, were found to have been hiding behind the colouring, no doubt watching the volunteers and listening to the three services a Sunday, and thus had been interested in the Church and the Army ever since they had ceased to adorn the medical profession in 1725, when Joseph Rous was supposed to have suppressed them. Beneath the floor Mr. Potter found that a great quantity of posts, made of unhewn timber, had supported the ninety feet of flooring for dancers in the early eighteenth century, when the foundation no doubt needed to be strong, for the balls were kept up all night. In 1882 this historic hall was pulled down, and, close to the site of it, ten years afterwards, was built the

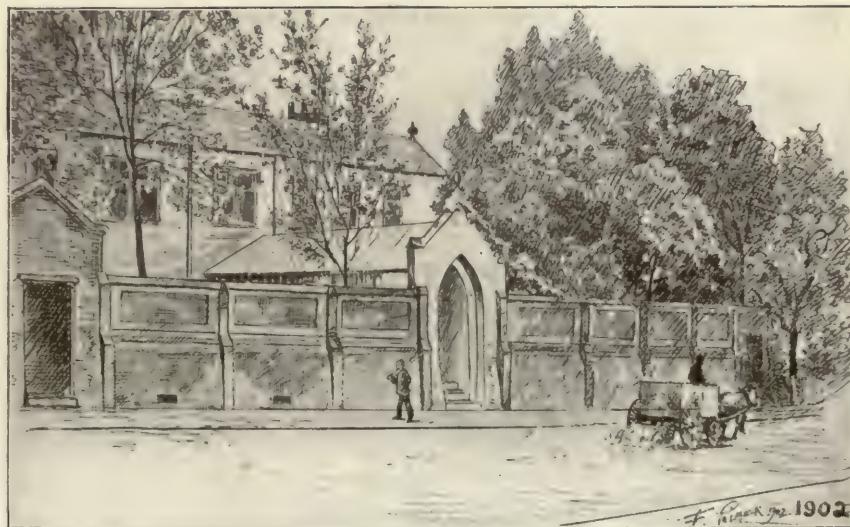
house called "Well-Side," around which, and in the adjacent gardens, many of the ancient trees surrounding the old spot were preserved.

This account of the Long Room has taken us into the nineteenth century, and we must now return to the eighteenth. We have seen the seriousness of its changed character, and may well believe that, under the conditions of Episcopal worship following upon professional card-cheating, the respectability of Well Walk east became re-established, now that the spa was temporarily swept away by reason of its own excesses—1724-25. After this the chalybeate water flowed on in an uneventful existence for nearly ten years.

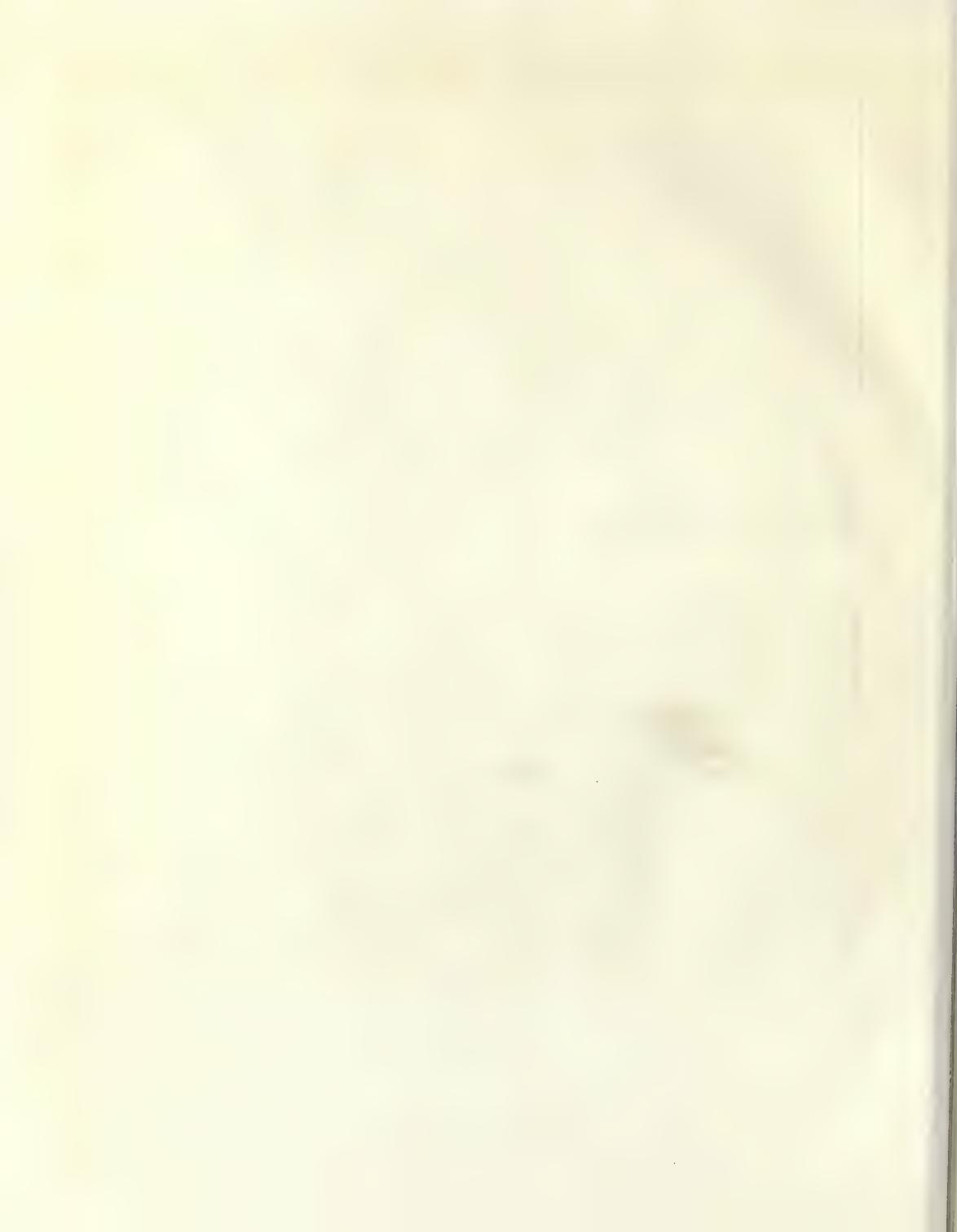
SECOND PERIOD. WEATHERALL PLACE.—About the time of 1733 a move was made to revive the public interest in Hampstead as a health resort. The means tried were, at first, purely medical, but it was soon found necessary to add the social attractions which had strengthened the popularity of the spa at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Care was taken on this second occasion to avert the disaster of low company and rough behaviour. The charge for tickets was raised, and doubtful visitors assiduously excluded. The Assembly Room, the Pump Room, the elegant Ball Room and dainty "Thea" Rooms—cups without handles, thea eighteen shillings a pound—were all devoted to persons of quality, intellectuals and polite dandies who flicked the stray grains of snuff off their satin and velvet clothes with their costly lace handkerchiefs, while they discoursed in perfumed



THE LONG ROOM, WELL WALK, AND JOHN CONSTABLE'S HOUSE



THE SECOND LONG ROOM, NOW WEATHERALL HOUSE



language on the witticisms and the last *bons mots* at the Coffee Houses. The curative powers of the chalybeate waters had been boomed by the chief resident medical man at Hampstead namely Dr. Soame—for Dr. Gibbon had been dead now nine years. John Soame described them as “ that inexhaustible fountain of health.” An original edition of his work is in the hands of the present writer, the paper brown with age and spotted with damp, the printing wrought with long S’s and with a capital letter to every noun. The title page states that the book was “ Printed for the Author and sold by F. Clay and D. Browne, without Temple Bar 1734.”

The doctor tells how he “ experimented upon the chalybeate Waters which break from the Declivity of the Hill at the East of the Town near the Chapel (The old Long Room) and Bowling Green.” His tests were made on August 8, 1733, “ about six in the Morning being very clear Weather and the Sun shining very hot.” He recalls to the memory of the public the time when the Wells were “ frequented with as much and as good Company as used to go yearly to Tunbridge-Wells in Kent.” We read—though not in Dr. Soame’s writing—that he made a very good living out of the waters, and that he was extremely wrathful when the King and Court, after visiting Hampstead for many seasons, resorted instead to Cheltenham, robbing the former spa of the prestige which the royal presence had lent it. The garrulous doctor gives much advice concerning the use of the mineral spring, with quaint injunctions

and descriptions, painfully detailed, of the cases he had already treated successfully. He tells us that the water when bottled "may be kept one or two Years quite dry in a Cellar and when uncorked is most ready to fly ; it will knit up like a Glass of Champagne." The waters might be bought in this brilliant condition at the Coffee House in Ludgate and at the "Sugarloaf" Tavern, Charing Cross. Then follows more information concerning the analysis of the mineral spring, after which he continues :—

The next thing I shall speak of is the Air where we drink these Waters. . . . that of Hampstead is hardly to be equalled, the Village being so delicately situated and so convenient. . . . The Air here is very dry and perfectly Balsamic not passing over boggy and marshy Land, nor very high Mountains nor excessive large Woods both which according to the Naturalist's Opinion commonly attract the moisture of the Clouds ; but we are situated upon several Hills with gravelly and sandy Soil and not above four Miles from the Thames. It is a most delightful Village, somewhat romantick yet every way pleasant . . . the Heavens clear in that Season of the Year that the great and populous City of London is covered with Fogs, Smoaks, and often thick Darkness, being frequently obliged to burn Candles in the middle of the Day ; while we are blest with the benign and comfortable Rays of a glorious Sun, breathing a free and wholesome Air without the noisome Smell of stinking Fogs or other malignant Fumes and Vapours too, too common in large Cities . . . which is the reason that numbers of Citizens are obliged to rusticate very often. From near the water-spring [he says] You have a noble and extensive View. . . . I have with the help of a Telescope seen very plain in a clear Day, Gravesend Windmill which must be twenty-five Miles distant from this Place. When we mount up higher on the Heath you have the View more extensive : at the Summit you may see into nine or ten Counties at least. I have seen

out of Mr. Brookes' Parlour, with his Telescope, the Ships lying at anchor before Gravesend and even a good way beyond it. Here you may divert your Eyes either by seeing the Ships sailing up and down the River, or with the View of several fine Palaces which you may see with your naked Eye, as Windsor Castle in a clear Morning or Evening appears very plain and Noble though above twenty Miles from you ; the Duke of Chandois' Palace at Edgware appears as if it were within two or three Miles of you ; and the Earl of Tilney's at Wanstead. The View that we enjoy at Hampstead is, I believe, more than any other Village so near London can boast of, if I was to add in all England I believe I should not mistake.

Dr. Soame mentions that the place "yields rarest medicinal Herbs," and that the "Apothecaries' Company meets here every Spring"; he speaks of the "Lilies of the Valley which grow in such large Quantities in sheltered Parts of the Heath."

Thus the advantages of the village, of the waters, and of his own skill were grandiloquently set forth by the happy doctor, and visitors induced by these, and by the social attractions, again gathered in large numbers. Dr. Soame could have enjoyed this success for a few years only, for we find his death recorded by the historian J. J. Park for the year 1738.

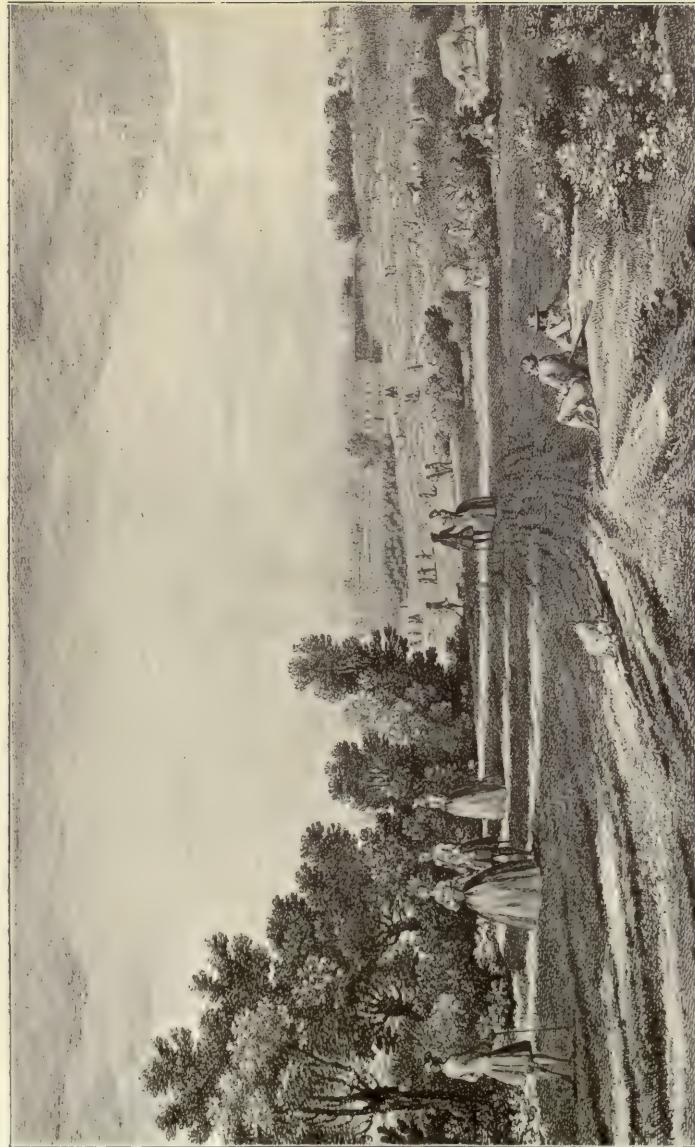
Concerning the premises for the revived chalybeate cure. We have seen that the rooms used at the beginning of the eighteenth century were all either taken down or appropriated to other purposes ; and it is well to observe this fact definitely, seeing that mistakes still remain uncorrected, and nebulous statements occur in print. Much confusion has clouded this subject, owing to the fact that all the new rooms at the west end of Well Walk bore the same designations as

those which had previously existed at the east end, though a clear interval of ten years had elapsed between the activities of the two.

LONG ROOM, 1734. WEATHERALL HOUSE.—It has been a matter of regret that no information existed which gave the exact year of the inauguration of the second Long Room in connection with the Wells. Mr. Potter quotes the transference of this property from one tenant to another, and because that deed contains no reference to the use made of the building which already stood on the estate he adds : “ It is fair to infer that the Long Room did not therefore exist *as such*,” *i.e.*, as “ an Assembly Room in connection with the Spa.”

If we wait for documentary evidence from the house-property records we get no assurance until 1753, and Mr. Potter bids us therefore to rest content to place the date of the inauguration anywhere between 1734 and 1753. But this wide range of uncertainty is not necessary, for, turning from local evidence to the region of literature, Swift’s “ Correspondence ” gives a letter from Pope under date of October, 1734, saying, “ I spent a whole day with Dr. Arbuthnot at Hampstead, he was in the Long Room half the morning and has parties at cards every night.” We see that this occurred during one of the intervals of Dr. Arbuthnot’s illness which was being treated by the chalybeate waters; his death took place early in the following year.

We have in this, therefore, and other literary



A VIEW OF THE LONG ROOM, HAMPSTEAD

(From an Engraving by Chatelain, 1752)



references sufficient proof that the Pump and Card Rooms were at work by the autumn of 1734, if not, indeed, earlier.

It is interesting to find Dr. Arbuthnot still visiting Hampstead in the seventieth year of his life. He had driven up Haverstock Hill in his own coach, taking up Sir Richard Steele from his lonely cottage to spend, with himself, Pope, Swift and Gay, a social hour at the "Upper Flask" Inn. This was in the doctor's famous days, previous to the death of Queen Anne, which had deprived him of his post at Court. Dr. Arbuthnot was staying on this last occasion in Pond Street—the Harley Street of that day, where many other select visitors resided besides the physicians of that period. Suffering from dropsy, asthma and other afflictions, he writes to Dean Swift : "No man at my age could hope to recover." Also he tells his friend that the only trouble he has is the grief which his family feel at the approaching inevitable separation ; for himself, he says, he has a "reasonable hope of going to a good place and the certainty of leaving a very bad one." In the alternations of oppression and relief in his breathing, the old characteristic wit would re-assert itself, and humour shot up in his conversation like bubbles in a glass of champagne. On leaving Hampstead the doctor predicted of himself that during the winter his symptoms would reappear, and this proved to be the case with fatal termination in the month of February, 1735. After the death of their mutual friend, Mr. Pulteney writes to Dean Swift that "Arbuthnot's was a nature

grieved to see the wickedness of mankind," and that he was "particularly esteemed by his own countrymen"—he had been born in Scotland, the son of a Presbyterian minister, in 1665. On being asked in company his opinion of the good doctor's wit Swift replied: "He has more than we all have, and his humanity is equal to his wit. . . . Had the world but a dozen Arbuthnots then would I burn my Travels" ("Gulliver's Travels"). It was also said of him: "He was a man of humour, whose mind seemed to be always pregnant with comic ideas."

Many were the interesting and distinguished persons who were to be found in the Long Room after poor Arbuthnot had fulfilled his "reasonable hope of going to a good place." Pope had recently visited the Wells, to take care of the helpless John Gay, whom he loved with that exceptional devotion which he bestowed on his own mother; but after Gay was dead Pope continued to come until 1744, the last year of his own life, in the company of his friend William Murray, afterwards Lord Mansfield. This rising lawyer was constantly drawn here by the pure air and unique atmosphere of the picturesque village, and by the social intercourse invariably to be found in the neighbourhood. His attachment to Hampstead, according to his own words, amounted to a passion. In 1755, when he became Chief Justice, he bought the mansion and fine estate of Kenwood Place, and lived there until his death at the age of eighty-six in the year 1793. William Murray, so susceptible to the rural charm of the

neighbourhood, must often have admired and desired this glorious seat on the further side of the Heath, and it was a happy idea of the Earl of Bute, who possessed it, to wish to pay his lordly debts and be willing to sell this property to enable him to do so.

Other visitors to the spa were Sir Joshua Reynolds, who came from his house in Leicester Square, and Gainsborough, Oliver Goldsmith, Garrick and the dainty little fop Colley Cibber, who, though bordering on eighty years of age, was ever ready still to pay court to a woman of fashion, or to inflict on a suffering audience those compositions which, during his stage career, had taken the form of drama, but during his Laureateship were expressed in pompous and tedious odes.

At the Assembly Room dances Miss Fanny Burney—the Fannikin of Dr. Johnson—was present, and afterwards made use of her impressions in the construction of her novel “*Evelina*,” where she represents a scene of gaiety in the Long Room. After the publication of this romance in 1778 Miss Burney became a person of much remark, not only when promenading in the Wells Walk at Hampstead, but also on the Pantiles at Tunbridge Wells and in the Steyne at Brighton; for the novel, still a rare form of literature, had found favour in good literary circles and had pleased most important personages. Mrs. Barbauld, herself a woman of letters, writes of little Fanny Burney: “She is the great object of interest this season, that is,” she adds, “after the balloon which goes up at the Pantheon.”

Mrs. Barbauld, who lived in Hampstead for seventeen years, from 1785 to 1802, was often to be met in the later days of the Wells ; a letter from Samuel Rogers the banker-poet invites her to a party at the Long Room October 22, 1788.

At the end of the eighteenth century, when the wells for the second time became almost extinct, the Long Room of that period was transformed into, and adapted for, the use of a private residence, under the tenancy of Thomas Weatherall who was succeeded by his son. This surname has remained upon the building until the present time 1912. A subsequent proprietor, about 1874, built a high wall between the house and the road, thus hiding it very largely from the pedestrian, but, happily, by the kindness of the owner antiquarians have been welcome to inspect the historic premises. The modern walls of the house are red brick, encasing the original white structure, and this accounts for the changed aspect of the building after the middle of the nineteenth century.

There were later attempts concerning the chalybeate waters to revive their medicinal use, but without the social accompaniments of previous times. In 1802 Dr. Bliss published in *The London Medical Review* an analysis of the spring which bubbled forth from the original spot on the south side of Well Road. Other analyses also were made in the nineteenth century, the last of them being that of Dr. William Garnett (in 1899), who, coming to live at 3, Foley Avenue, Well Walk, was interested in the quantity of water running

at the end of his garden, close to Well Road, which was conducted by a pipe to the sewer in Well Walk. This water, upon his examination, was found to contain “enough iron to make it the colour of sherry”; but, alas! enough organic matter also to make the public thankful that the pipe conducted it to the sewer instead of to the memorial fountain. This fountain is now kept dry for obvious reasons, and stands as a mere monument, the chief interest being in its inscription. It is not, however, wholly impossible that the mineral water may again be traced to its pure source and conducted without contamination to this historic spot whence it issued for a hundred years, to the benefit of the inhabitants and visitors of this peculiarly interesting village of Hampstead.

CHAPTER III

STEELE'S COTTAGE
CHALK FARM
PRIMROSE HILL

ROSSLYN HOUSE

HAVERSTOCK HILL
LOAD OF HAY INN
BELSIZE HOUSE

STEELE'S COTTAGE.—In his capacity as censor of public morals, Steele published, as we have seen, an article in the *Tatler* on the subject of the raffling shops at the Hampstead Wells, in August, 1709, and upon the degenerate condition of society at that popular health and pleasure resort, when the premises had been opened nine years. Thus, around the frame of a quaint portrait of the moralist, we find inscribed :—

Improving youth and hoary age
Are bettered by thy matchless page.

The censor of morals was living at this time in close retirement remote from London, at a conveniently unknown spot—the southern portion of Hampstead parish. Whatever his own faults of reckless extravagance, no one could accuse him “of frittering away his money by paying his debts.” Literature could be pursued in the country, creditors could be avoided. There seemed also another reason why the lively



STEELE'S COTTAGE



DUELLING FIELD, CHALK FARM



Dick Steele should be hidden at this period, for, in July, 1712, Swift writes to a friend :—

Steele was arrested the other day for making a lottery directly against an Act of Parliament, he is now under prosecution. . . . I believe he will very soon lose his employment, for he has been mighty impertinent of late in his *Spectators*. [He held the post of Gazetteer and Commissioner of Stamps: his office was at the Cockpit, in Whitehall.]

Frequently, during the summer of 1712, the Hampstead stage coach, having laboriously arrived at the "Load of Hay" Tavern, would deposit the courtly Mr. Addison, who crossed over to the high bank of the opposite side. With his stately grace he walked up the narrow garden path to enter Steele's cottage, and there conferred with the essayist and wit on articles for the new ventures the *Spectator* and the *Guardian*. Steele writes in June, 1712, to his new friend Mr. Pope, whose acquaintance he made through Pope's contributions to the *Spectator*: "I am in a solitary spot between London and Hampstead." His "darling Prue" had lodgings at this time in Bury Street, St. James's, and Steele went to visit her in the dusk of evening. Soon afterwards, however, a gust of good fortune came, and Lady Steele exchanged her lodgings in Bury Street for a house of her own in Bloomsbury Square, where Sir Richard was able to join her. Here she figured it bravely, driving out in her private coach—that coach which, with other luxuries for the wife whom he adored, landed the warm-hearted Irishman in pecuniary difficulties again.

CHARLES SEDLEY.—Concerning the previous inhabi-

tant of Steele's cottage, Charles Sedley, the wit and play-writer who died there, it was written :—

Sedley had that prevailing gentle art,
Which can with a resistless charm impart
The loosest wishes to the chapest heart.

Sir Charles Sedley acquired for himself the well-earned title of "profligate companion to a profligate monarch," but we have the assurance of one of his friends that " poor Sedley, after suffering much for his offences, took up and grew serious, subsequently becoming one of the leading men in the House of Commons."

Sedley's cottage continued to stand until 1867, when bricks and mortar spreading apace had covered the fields from London to Haverstock Hill, and the cottage and garden, being swept away, were replaced by the present public-house called "Sir Richard Steele," and the row of shops named Steele's Terrace.

CHALK FARM.—The only thoroughfare from London to Hampstead village, until 1830, lay in the Chalk Farm Road, which ran from the fields behind Oxford Street, and approached the outlying farm on the southern border of the parish.

For topographical and pedestrian purposes it is simplest, to-day, to set out from the Chalk Farm Station on the Hampstead Tube Railway, and to follow the high-road in one long line up Haverstock Hill, Rosslyn Hill and the High Street ; then, avoiding the temptation to turn off at Heath Street, we must pursue the original road in an unbroken line of ascent up Holly

Hill to the summit, where we shall stand on a height level with the cross above the dome of St. Paul's. Let us, for instance, see things as they were, and travel outside the stage coach which set off from St. Giles's for the "Bird in Hand" at Hampstead.

CHALK FARM.—After leaving London there were very few houses in sight, except the buildings on the Chalcot estate, afterwards called Chalk Farm, and a tavern known in 1678 as "The White House," with tea-gardens. "Here lay the broad fields," we read, "that stretch out their green expanse at the foot of Primrose Hill." About the year 1756 this solitary meadow-land became the convenient resort of duellists, and continued to be used for this purpose until early in the nineteenth century, supplying the loss of the famous duelling ground in the field around Montagu House. Those fields having been built upon by the erection of the British Museum and the "New Road"—afterwards called Euston Road—combatants were desirous of an undisturbed spot in a truly rural district like Chalk Farm at the beginning of Haverstock Hill. As late as 1846 Charles Dickens, speaking of these tea-gardens, mentions the yet remaining "bowers for smoking and reading, whence a fair prospect and invigorating breeze were to be enjoyed."

PRIMROSE HILL.—On the west of the Chalk Farm meadows, and of the tea-gardens belonging to the tavern, rose the big mound long ago called Barrow Hill, where in Saxon times a "barrow" or shelter had covered the burying place of a great chieftain. A

charter in the British Museum, which gives the ancient boundaries of Hampstead in 986, mentions this barrow as being on the extreme south of the manor. Owing to the lovely pasture-lands of Chalcot Farm, which spread up this incline, the place became known in the sixteenth century as Primrose Hill, and again we find it sung in the Roxburgh ballads in 1621 by this new and more pleasing name. A road lying further west retains the old name of Barrow Hill Road, until the present day in the twentieth century.

In 1832 it was said "Hampstead Road, and the once beautiful fields leading to and surrounding Chalk Farm, have not escaped the profanation of the builders' craft." In 1853 the tavern was pulled down, and the duelling field and tea-gardens were built upon. St. George's Terrace rose on the east side, and at one of those houses died the widow of Lord Byron in 1860. The Chalcot estate had remained, until the reign of Henry VI., in the possession of Westminster, but at this time discussions arising between the convent and the Abbey, the King settled the dispute by giving the Chalcot acres to his recently founded college of Eton. That it remained in the possession of the school authorities is manifest in the later half of the nineteenth century, when the new roads on the estate were named Merton, Winchester, Fellows, Provost, Oppidans, King Henry's, Eton Road and Eton Avenue.

"LOAD OF HAY" INN.—From "Chalk Farm" Tavern, which yielded a happy halting place between London and Hampstead village, the high road soon became a



HAMPSTEAD FROM PRIMROSE HILL 1756



very stiff climb, and the coach-horses rested again at the “Load of Hay” Inn, opposite Steele’s cottage, which stood at the top of a sharp ascent. This place, though now a hideous public-house, which was built in the middle of the nineteenth century, descended from more romantic predecessors, and we hear of it at one time as “a low wooden structure, picturesque and surrounded by fair tea-gardens.” To be sure of finding refreshment for his beast at this spot it is told that a monk, riding from Westminster to say mass at Hampstead Church, periodically drew bridle at the horse-block, having bargained with the host of the “Load of Hay” always to *have a stock* for him: thus it was reported, though with doubtful authenticity, to have been named Haverstock Hill—the more probable derivation being from the Low Latin word *averia*, pasture.

BELLASIS OR BELSIZE.—Between Steele’s cottage on the Chalcot estate and the actual entrance to Hampstead village lay on the same side of the high-road the ancient sub-manor of Belsize. “Here in a great house once lived Roger le Brabazon, Chief Justice to Edward II.” His two hundred and thirty-two acres of park-land and meadow were bounded by a high stone wall on the south-west dividing it from the forest of St. John—the neighbourhood now known as St. John’s Wood. In 1316, on his death-bed, these Bellasis acres were given by le Brabazon to the monks of Westminster, on condition that they should say daily mass for himself, and the Earl of Lancaster and his wife Blanche. Thus the very modern Lancaster Road, Belsize Park, is

the most ancient record on that manor. After the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539, Henry VIII. bestowed Belsize on his newly-formed bishopric of Westminster in 1550, the possession falling afterwards into the hands of the Dean and Chapter of the Abbey. That it belonged to them still when the estate was built upon in the middle of the nineteenth century, we may see from the fact of two of its roads being named after Westminster Deans, viz., Buckland Crescent and Stanley Gardens; but in 1887 the dean and chapter sold this sub-manor to the Charity Commissioners.

The Belsize Avenue of to-day is the partial remains of the carriage drive which once extended from the lodge as far as St. Peter's Church—the site of the old Bellasis mansion. From the great gates at the high-road of Haverstock Hill under those old trees, which have withered and budded afresh ever since, rode Armigall Waad, the lessee of the place in the sixteenth century; he paid a rental of £19 2s. 10d., also ten loads of hay and of oats to his ecclesiastical landlords at Westminster.

Waad had taken his degree at Magdalen College, Oxford in 1531; entered one of the Inns of Court and afterwards set out on his adventurous travels.

In a ship whose name was "The Minion" went a very virtuous and learned gentleman, one Armigil Waade, afterwardes clerk of the counsailes of King Henry VIII and Edward VI. Being assisted by the king's favour and good countenance he encouraged divers gentlemen and others to accompany him in a voyage of discoverie upon the N.W. parts of America. They embarked at Gravesend



SIR SPENCER PERCEVAL



SIR WILLIAM WAAD, KNT.



BELSIZE HOUSE



towards the end of April 1536 and sailed to Cape Breton . . . and to Newfoundland where they suffered from famine to such a degree that the ship's company began to devour one another, but were at length relieved by the arrival of a French ship well victualed.

In the year 1559 Armigall was employed on an embassy by Queen Elizabeth.

Having gone through his life with honour and reputation (said Park), he drew his last breath at his mansion of Belsize in June 1568, and a fair monument of alabaster was raised on the chancel in Hampstead Church [the old church, pulled down in 1745].

The funeral certificate announces :—

To the Herauldes of Armes that Mr. Armegill Waade, Esquire, died at Belsis in Hampstede Parrishe beside London, making his sonne and hayre Will'm Waade his executor.

This William had also been an ambassador for Queen Elizabeth in many important diplomatic affairs, one of which was to the King of Spain, concerning the treasonous behaviour of his minister Mendoza in England. Later, Waad was sent to Portugal and Denmark, and again to negotiate liberation for Elizabeth's Royal prisoner Mary Stuart. A Scottish Jesuit, being found with guilty papers upon him, tore them and threw them into the sea.

But they were by the force of the wind blowne backe again into the shippe, *not without a miracle*. The papers being brought to Sir William Waade, with much labour and singular skill hee joyned them together againe and found that they contained new practises of the Pope, the Spaniard etc,

and the Queen of Scots did not therefore enjoy the "faire opportunitie and meanes" with which

Elizabeth had been willing to set her free. William Waad, among other positions in the State, held that of Counsellor to King James I., who knighted him at Greenwich, 1603. He was also Lieutenant to the Tower during the imprisonment of Sir Walter Raleigh, against whom he gained secret evidence for his trial. The lieutenancy was brought to a close by Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, who, planning the murder of a certain knight in the Tower, found the "integrity and uprightness of Sir William Waade too much inconvenient"; he therefore removed him from his post in 1613. More than a hundred years afterwards some writing of Waad's was found in the Tower, giving an account—in Latin—of the conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot.

Some lines from his long epitaph, 1623, describe him as a—

True watch of state . . . whose hand still pointed
To the kingdom's good and sovereign safety.

After Sir William's death the lease of Belsize was renewed by his widow Lady Anne Waad who left it eventually to her son (by a previous marriage) Lord Wotton. From Lord Wotton it came to the second Earl of Chesterfield who was a half-brother—for Lady Anne was married three times—and with the Chesterfield's it remained for a hundred and thirty years. In "Pepys' Diary," August, 1668, we read :—

I went to Hampstead and Belsize and saw my Lord Wotton's house and garden which is wonderful fine, the garden is the most noble that ever I saw, such brave orange and lemon trees.

And in "Evelyn's Diary" under date of June 2, 1676, it is recorded:—

We returned in the evening by Hampstead to see Lord Wotton's house and garden—Bellsiz House—built with vast expense by Mr. O'Neale, an Irish gentleman who married Lord Wotton's mother. The furniture is very particular for Indian cabinets, porcelain and other solid and noble moveables. The gallery very fine, the gardens very large, butt ill-kept, yet worthy and changeable. The soil a cold weeping clay not answering the expense.

This "wonderful fine" house and garden, standing empty for many years, when Lord Chesterfield lived on the Continent, was finally leased by a new tenant who opened it as a place of public entertainment, one of the amusements being the hunting of wild deer in the park. Thus during the reigns of George I. and II. it maintained a character as popular as its successors Ranelagh and Vauxhall, the latter being opened in 1736.

The first announcement is on April 16, 1720:—

Whereas that the ancient and noble house near Hampstead commonly called Bellasis House, is now taken and fitted up for the entertaining of gentlemen and ladies during the whole summer season, the same will be opened with an uncommon solemnity of music and dancing. This undertaking will exceed all of the kind that has hitherto been known near London, commencing every day at six in the morning and continuing till eight at night, all persons being privileged to admittance without necessity of expense.

Also, "Persons inclined to walk and divert themselves may breakfast on tea and coffee as cheap as at their own chambers." "There will be twelve stout fellows, completely armed, to patrol between London and Belsize."

The gambling, however, rose so high that sums of money carried along the high road were large enough to necessitate thirty instead of twelve armed fellows to protect the winners on their return home.

In July, 1721, *Read's Journal* announces: "Last Saturday their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales dined at Belsize, attended by several persons of quality, where they were entertained by the diversions of hunting and such other"—including horse-racing—"as the place afforded, with which they seemed well pleased, and at their departure were very liberal to the servants." Visitors were also told, "There is a very good ordinary at two o'clock, with two cooks which dress everything to perfection, and a good set of musick every day of the season."

The *St. James's Journal*, May, 1722, says:—

On Monday last the appearance of nobility and gentry at Belsize was so great that they reckoned between three and four hundred coaches, at which time a wild deer was hunted down and killed in the park before the company, which gave three hours diversion.

During the course of years, however, the company became so unrefined and so immoral in their diversions that the house of folly had to be closed. Various complaints were published by respectable residents in Hampstead. Among the letters on the subject has been preserved some doggerel verse, beginning—

This house which is a nuisance to the land
Doth near a park and handsome garden stand
Fronting the road betwixt a range of trees
And is perfuméd by a Hampstead breeze.

After a lapse of years the manor of Belsize regained its former dignity, the house then being inhabited by a brother of Lord Arden, viz., the Hon. Spencer Perceval, who was one of the Guardians of the Workhouse, and who married the daughter of Sir Thomas Spencer Wilson, Lord of the Manor. Perceval was Patron and President of the Society of the Philoinvestigists which first held its meetings at the "Lower Flask" Inn, 1781. In 1787 this society passed a resolution for instituting Sunday schools in Hampstead. It is well-known how Spencer Perceval became Prime Minister of England, and was shot dead by a madman in the Lobby of the House of Commons, in 1812.

The mansion, previously Elizabethan in architecture, had been entirely rebuilt in the reign of Charles II., and was pulled down in 1852. The park and meadow-land, forming a stretch of green country between Haverstock Hill and St. John's Wood, were now cut up into roads and built upon; St. Peter's Church which, it must be remembered, occupies the site of Belsize House, was consecrated in 1859. Its first and only vicar, the Rev. Dr. Tremlett, remains there still, 1912, having held the living for fifty-three years.

HAMPSTEAD GREEN.—The entrance to the village of Hampstead was near to the modern Town Hall, and not far north of this spot stood the "George" Tavern on the high-road beside the Village Green; that tavern with its original red-tiled roof remains there still, protesting that the ground now covered by St. Stephen's Church, the Hampstead General Hospital, and the

Convent of the Sisters of Providence, was once a wide slope of grass, shaded by very tall trees, and reaching down to a round railed-in pool at the bottom of Pond Street. Close to the "George" Tavern is the Hampstead Green Post Office, and this name is almost the only memorial of the Green having existed. In the eighteenth century, hawthorn hedges and meadows lay peacefully beside the high-road in the early morning sunlight, notwithstanding the fact that highwaymen here nightly pointed their pistols at the coaches, and footpads frightened pedestrians out of their wits and their purses, making it necessary to engage a guard for safe conduct when leaving the fields near to Oxford Street before setting out on that lonely country road.

ROSSLYN HOUSE.—On the Belsize estate stood a second good residence called originally Shelford Lodge. It was thought to have been thus named by the Lords of Chesterfield, after their family seat, and they, during their possession of the Belsize estate, chose to occupy this, instead of Belsize House. It stood alone in the meadows; a footpath led from the latter mansion up the hill to this house, and thence across the top of the Conduit Fields to the parish church. This residence faced the Village Green, and stood back from the high road, much the same as did Belsize House, though approached by a shorter carriage drive. The trees of this avenue, planted in the shape of a cross, were very old and fine; their rings proved their age to be more than three hundred years. The girth of one of the Spanish chestnuts measured eighteen feet,



BARON LOUGHBOROUGH
(Earl of Rosslyn)



ROSSLYN HOUSE



another nineteen feet six inches, and a large hollow trunk served as the hereditary home of a family of owls. In 1860 parts of these beautiful grounds were cut up for building, though the house itself continued to stand until 1895, when the remaining portion of the avenue was also cruelly destroyed, and truly a respectable historian hesitates to record what may have been said by those owls on the subject !

When enlargements were being made to the house in 1795, also when alterations were taking place in 1861, coins were found beneath the floor, bearing dates of Queen Elizabeth's reign, as well as those of Charles II. and William IV. Upon the old panels, when the paper which had defaced them had been removed, were deciphered the following words in a boyish handwriting —and spelling :—

“ To-morrow the last day of Hollidays !!!!! 1769.”

The date of 1667 was found on a strong leaden cistern in a bathroom, whose water was supplied by a fresh spring near the thorn-tree in the garden, and which had, before the new water supply, been used as a public well. In the garden was a wild clematis of wonderful size, forming an *allée* sixty feet long, and thought to be the largest root in the kingdom.

Unlike Belsize Mansion, which was approached by a declining drive, this house stood on an eminence from the road, and thus enjoyed a magnificent prospect. Facing the east, its occupants could at that time see over Highbury as far as Epping Forest ; on the west,

over a sweep of blue distance, down to the Thames valley, across the Surrey Hills, and along the river beyond Richmond ; to the north lay the village of Hampstead and the wild Heath; to the south the park-land of Belsize, towards which the slopes of Shelford Lodge spread downward in soft lawns and terraces.

But lovely as this place still remained towards the close of the eighteenth century, there came to live in it at that time one of the most unlovely of lawyers and men. Alexander Wedderburn—created Baron Loughborough on his appointment as Chief Justice in 1780—was living at Branch Hill Lodge when he was made Lord Chancellor, and purchased Shelford Lodge in 1792.

As a practising barrister in Edinburgh, he had quarrelled with his judges there, pulled off his gown, laid it before the Bar, marched out of Court, and come to London in 1757. He was called to the English Bar, quickly became distinguished in the Court of Chancery, and in 1763 became a K.C. Set on social advancement, his professional goal was the Woolsack. Clear-headed, pushing, unscrupulous and cruel, he possessed every endowment of Nature for the attainment of his purpose. In serving his own ends, he was endued with a facility for changing his principles (!) as occasion required. His crowning qualification for success lay in his absence of conscience, and of any human sympathy whatever. He was appointed in 1771 Solicitor-General, in 1778 Attorney-General, in 1780 he became Chief Justice, and in 1795 Lord Chancellor.

This merciless lawyer has been called a second Judge Jeffreys, but even then he had not the excuse for his savage slaughters and sentences of death, in that he did not suffer, as did Jeffreys, from the nervous ravages of a tormenting disease. At the time Wedderburn was Chief Justice and his title Baron Loughborough, the name of the hangman was Burreagh, and it was said that his lordship took so great a delight in putting on the Black Cap that people would call him Lord "Love Burreagh." Another characteristic was displayed when he tried to abolish the right of the poor to glean in the harvest-fields, and thus to deprive them of a benefit which human-kindness and the spirit of poetry had bestowed since the days of Moses. Again, in the case of some women who had been condemned to be burnt to death for minting false coins he refused to commute their sentences from burning to hanging.

The mischief which Loughborough did in aggravating and fomenting the war with America is considered to be incalculable, and his actions in the matter treacherous and base. Dr. Benjamin Franklin said that, "however long he lived, he would never forgive the insults which had been heaped upon his countrymen by that man."

In his private relationships Loughborough was not lacking in skill: he quite appropriately married for his first wife a lady of wealth, and in the year following her death, a lady of blood, the daughter of Lord Courtenay. The acquaintance with the heiress, Miss Dawson, of Darley, had probably been made when he was on legal tour, for Yorkshire was the county in which

his circuit lay. He left no son to succeed him as second Earl of Rosslyn, but appointed his nephew St. Clair Erskine as heir. At Shelford Lodge, when he was created Lord Chancellor, Loughborough lived in pompous style, starting with the purchase of a set of plate which cost him eight thousand pounds. Here he entertained the Prince of Wales as well as the leaders of the Whig party, including Fox, Sheridan, Burke and others; also the distinguished persons of the opposite political party, such as Pitt, Windham, and the Duke of Portland.

The master of this establishment kept an immense retinue of servants, and drove out in a gilded coach, with other coaches in procession containing his secretary and attendants. This exaggerated show formed a contrast to the method of his successor, who would walk to the House of Lords as an ordinary foot-passenger and allow the Great Seal to be taken thither in a hackney coach. And this was Lord Eldon, whom the King appointed Chancellor in 1801, when Lord Loughborough, whom his Majesty disliked, was made to swallow the pill of dismissal, sweetened, however, by the jam for which his covetous mouth had long watered viz., a rise in the peerage—under the title of Earl of Rosslyn.

In addition to his places at Mitcham, Hampstead and elsewhere, he now bought a seat near to Windsor, so that he might make himself conspicuous at Court, and pay assiduous attentions to the King. He was present at a Royal function at Frogmore—where

he contracted an attack of gout in the stomach—on New Year's Eve, 1804. George III. was astonished at being told, two days afterwards, that Rosslyn was dead. When the King had first taken pains to verify the statement, he afterwards relieved his mind by remarking: “He has not left behind him a greater knave in my dominions !”

We may trace the occupants of Rosslyn House as far back as 1776, when the Hon. Mrs. Fellowes lived there. In 1860, a portion of the meadow was cut from the large grounds, the house and garden being bought by Mr. Charles Woodd, whose family remained in it until its demolition, thirty-five years later. On the south side of the garden the road was named Wedderburn, and, in 1860, when larger portions of the land were cut up into roads, we find those roads named after other distinguished members of the legal profession, many of whom actually lived in Hampstead, while a few appear to have been merely memorialised here. Of the latter we have instances in Lord Eldon and Lord Lyndhurst, while on the other hand, Lord Thurlow possessed a country house in this neighbourhood, as well as his residence in Great Ormond Street, at the back of which the fields still remained: and it was by that approach that the thieves came and stole the Great Seal, when it was in his official charge during his Chancellorship.

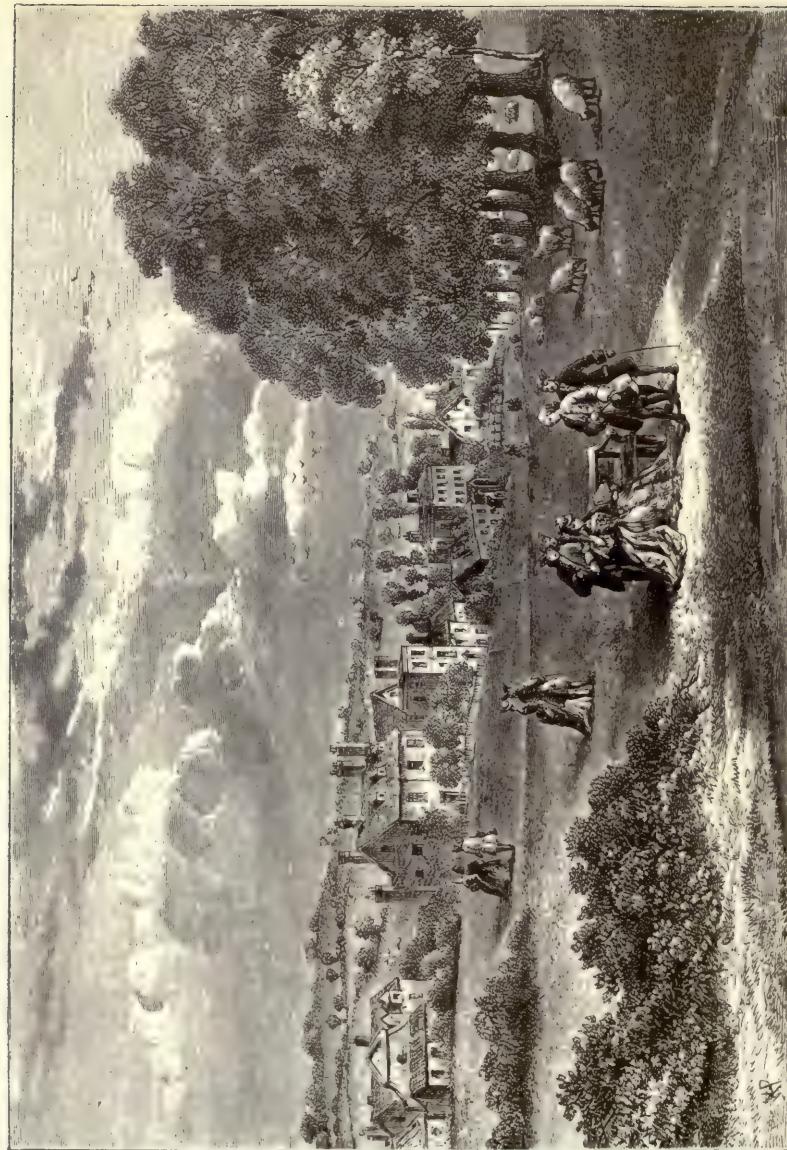
Another Chief Justice was Lord Alvanley, who had a house in Froginal, and died there in 1804. Baron Erskine, born in 1750, who was Lord Chancellor in

1806, lived in the house which still bears his name, on the Heath, behind the "Spaniard's" Inn. His house was occupied at another time by Chief Justice Tindall. Across the Spaniard's Road, and once communicating with Erskine House garden by an underground passage, lies the singularly beautiful estate bought by William Murray, first Earl of Mansfield, Chief Justice and Chancellor, who, full of years and legal authority, died in 1793.

As far back as the reign of Charles II., an Attorney-General lived at Hampstead, viz., Sir Geoffrey Palmer, Bart., manager of the evidence against the Earl of Strafford. Sir Geoffrey was imprisoned on suspicion in the Tower, but died in this quiet village on May 1, 1670.

The idea of these notes on Hampstead is to suggest the course of real or imaginary walks through the neighbourhood, rather than to record events in chronological order; but it happens that this brief reference to the Restoration Period takes us in time as well as place to the subject of the following chapter—to the house of one of the noblest and most able statesmen of the seventeenth century.





POND STREET AND HAMPSTEAD GREEN

CHAPTER IV

VANE HOUSE. SIR HARRY VANE,
BISHOP BUTLER, SIR THOMAS
NEAVE, CHARLES PILGRIM
STANFIELD HOUSE AND CLARKSON
STANFIELD

GEORGE ROMNEY

CHICKEN HOUSE
THE FORMER VICARAGE
NORWAY HOUSE
FLASK WALK
HOLLY HILL

VANE HOUSE.—Leaving the lodge of Rosslyn House, which faced the “George” Tavern, beside the Village Green, we could, at the close of the eighteenth century, have walked up Hampstead Hill without passing any other building, save Heddon House in the fields, while skirting all the way the beautiful and extensive grounds which surrounded Vane House.

This dwelling-place dates from the period of the Commonwealth, and is believed to have been built by Sir Harry Vane after his return from New England. It was originally a square-shaped mansion, of which the north wing only now remains. This smaller portion stands as a private residence, and bears the name of Belmont; while the body and south wing are modernised, covered with red brick, and used for the Soldiers’ Daughters’ Home, an institution which was opened in 1852 by the Prince Consort at Rosslyn House, but removed to Vane House in 1860.

The red medallion announcing that Vane lived here is placed by the Society of Arts on the walls of "Belmont." An old mulberry-tree, propped up and living after two hundred and fifty years, still stands in the garden, and the underground passage which led from the house to the high-road has been traced and partially unearthed. This home of Sir Harry Vane is thought to have been visited by Pym, Hampden, Fairfax, Cromwell, Milton—who was specially his friend—and others of the Liberal party ; and it was from the elm avenue of those lovely grounds in July, 1660, that the King's soldiers executed their master's iniquitous commands, and carried off Sir Harry Vane to his imprisonment and final execution (1662) in the Tower. "Certainly he is too dangerous a man to let live if we can find some honest means of putting him out of the way. Think on this and give me some account of it to-morrow," had whispered his treacherous and vindictive Majesty Charles II. concerning the most able and disinterested patriot in his realm ; "a man of endless virtue," said Thomas Carlyle, "and of endless intellect" ; but, in addition to his Liberal politics, Vane's very goodness was a standing offence to the King.

To the annoyance of his father—himself a courtier and Comptroller of the Household of Charles I.—Harry Vane was found, on his return from the University of Leyden, to have imbibed the spirit of republican Liberty—a liberty so pure that it was absolutely without prejudice, so resolute that in search of religious

freedom he left the aristocracy of which he was a prominent member, and the many manors and estates which he possessed here, to go to live in the crude society of New England. So tolerant was he that he declined on the one hand to take any part in the trial and condemnation of Charles I., and on the other hand rigidly refused to support the Protector in what he, Vane, considered a usurpation of the throne and a robbery of the hard-won rights of the English people.

In Massachusetts the Presbyterians were glad enough to avail themselves of his administrative abilities, and to appoint him Governor, but the gentleness and tolerance of his judgment did not satisfy their ideas of Liberal principles, which were rigorous and inconsistent—claiming independence of conscience for themselves, while denying it to all who differed from them. Too high-minded for mere partisanship, Vane was disappointed with what appeared to his broad views a revelation of bigotry, and not long after the cessation of his office—from which he was outvoted—he returned to England, where he could enjoy, at any rate, the civilisation of his friends, and the many advantages of living in the old country, despite the conservatism of Church and State—only another form of persecution from that which he was leaving in America.

On his return home Vane was immediately elected a member of the Parliament, which was about to meet after a lapse of twelve years ; he was also knighted and made Treasurer of the Navy, but these baits had never drawn him to the side of the then King, Charles I.,

whose despotism was abhorrent to his high and just conceptions of government. He threw in his exceptional powers of statesmanship on the side of the Parliament and Commonwealth, and in this way rendered valuable counsel and service throughout the war which dethroned King Charles I. Although, as Treasurer of the Navy, Sir Harry Vane had so much improved the condition of the British Fleet that she thenceforth held the position of Queen of the Seas, his patriotism led him to refuse the twenty thousand pounds a year which were the profits attached to his office.

At the making of the Republic he was chief statesman among his party, which included Scott, Ireton, Harrison, Bradshaw, Milton and others; nevertheless, at the parting of the ways with Cromwell, Vane retired, and the staunch Henry Marten with him, into private life. During that period he wrote many political works, and in his treatise called "The Healing Question," Vane's condemnation of Cromwell was so strong that that potentate caused him to be arrested and cast into a dungeon in Carisbrooke Castle, where the late King had spent the last year of his life. Neither the threatened confiscation of his many estates, nor the offer of favours or honours, produced the slightest effect on Vane's attitude toward the Protector, who, he considered, had overstepped the mark, and in his desire to rule was defrauding the nation of its new and precious liberty.

When the Commonwealth Government had expired

and the Royalists were in full power again, it would have seemed safer for Sir Harry Vane to have retired to one of his estates further removed from the Court and the capital—Raby Castle, for instance, in Durham ; Belleau in Lincolnshire ; or even Hadlow Manor in Kent, where he was born. But he loved the beautiful village of Hampstead and the house he had built on the leafy heights overlooking London, and here he determined to remain, saying that in connection with his country he had never done anything but that which his conscience directed as being for the glory of God. And, as has been already stated, he was entirely innocent of the late King's death.

The fact of Charles II. having made, at Breda, a solemn declaration of pardon concerning the past, may have somewhat assured Vane of his safety. Thus it came that on a day in July in the first year of the Restoration, this good man was pacing his garden in evening meditation, looking across the fields to where the sun was sinking behind the distant Surrey hills, when he turned to go into his house, and on his way thither, in the historic avenue of elms, he was served with a warrant from that royal breaker of promises. The peace of this secluded village had been broken by the military tramp up Hampstead Hill : some of the soldiers placed themselves at the great iron gates of Vane House to prevent an escape ; while others advanced further in search of their victim, whom they marched away to the Tower. There, and in other places of confinement, he spent two weary years of

suspense, until the unjust trial took place in which the judges were previously ordered, whatever the evidence, to condemn him to death.

The account of his execution, his noble calm, his assurance that he would "presently be at the right hand of Christ," his long speech of simple, dignified truth, which produced so favourable an impression on the crowd of listeners that the heralds were ordered to stand near the scaffold and drown his voice with their trumpets, is graphically related in the Diary of Mr. Pepys, who, frivolous man and devotee of Charles II. as he was, felt awed by the personality of this great and good Vane. After the account of the execution which Pepys gives under the date of June 14, 1662, he further adds, on June 22:—

Coming home to-night I met with William Swan, he told me that certainly Sir Harry Vane must be gone to heaven, for he died as much a martyr and saint as ever man did, and that the King hath lost more by that man's death than he will gain a good while.

BISHOP BUTLER.—In the first half of the succeeding century, Vane House came into the possession of Bishop Butler, author of the "Analogy between Religion and Nature," which is said to have been written in part under a large cedar tree, still standing in 1870. After the publication of this book, which was received as by far the greatest theological work of the age, he was made chaplain to Queen Caroline, who gathered around her men of metaphysical minds. On her death-bed the Queen recommended him to the favour of her husband, George II., who made him



SIR HARRY VANE



VANE HOUSE IN 1800

Bishop of Bristol; in 1740 he was made Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, and in 1750 Bishop of Durham. Dr. Butler lavished large sums of money upon restoring the churches and episcopal palaces to which he was appointed, though in his personal and domestic expenditure he was most simple, and would never dine on more than two courses, even when the Archbishop sat at his table. At the time of his death Vane House was, according to his will, sold for the payment of his debts. During the years of his ownership Dr. Butler put much stained glass into the windows, some of which pourtrayed a series of Biblical subjects, with an old inscription dated 1571, and others, representing the Apostles, were reported to have been a gift from the Pope.

Dr. Butler never married: he seems to have lived in Vane House with his chaplain, Dr. Forester, and had for his intimate neighbour, the Rev. Langhorne Warren, minister of the parish, who resided opposite to his grounds; for, unlike the present vicarage, "the old parsonage house lay in the High Street." This vicar was witness to a codicil in the Bishop's will, in which it was directed that "the letters and sermons in the deal box in my library are to be burnt." Dr. Butler went to Bath for his health and died there in June, 1752. He was buried in Bristol Cathedral.

We read that he was "of a most reverend aspect, thin and pale, with a divine placidity which inspired veneration and expressed a most benevolent mind; his white hair," the historian continues, "hung grace-

fully on his shoulders and his whole figure was patriarchal." He is described as "an earnest and deep-thinking Christian."

SIR THOMAS NEAVE.—Some thirty or forty years after the death of this noted divine, Vane House came into the possession of Thomas, eldest son of Sir Richard Neave, Bart. The mansion would at that time be standing in its original shape and size, the large pillared portico in the body of the house, the two wings remaining intact, the fine oak staircase leading up from the garden entrance behind. The interior was still hung with tapestry; and outside the elm-trees and the groves in the park-lands lay untouched. The large lawn in the garden must have become now more beautiful than in the days when Sir Harry Vane paced over it, by reason of the hundred and forty years' mowing and rolling which it had undergone since his time.

The stained-glass windows which had belonged to the Bishop now came into the possession of Mr. Neave, who removed some of them to Branch Hill Lodge when in 1799—before he came into his title and family estate in Essex—he purchased Branch Hill Lodge from Colonel Parker, a younger son of Lord Chancellor Macclesfield. When Park published his history in 1813, he described a valuable collection of coloured glass which Mr. Neave had obtained from various convents on the Continent immediately after the French Revolution. A window representing Catherine of Austria and Saint Anna came from Rouen, another portraying the Nativity from a convent at Ghent, a

large Crucifixion and many historical subjects were among the number.

CHARLES PILGRIM.—The owner of Vane House in the year 1813 was Charles Pilgrim, and it is from this fact that the narrow lane on the opposite side of the road acquired its name ; this furnishes us with a practical though unromantic solution of the mystery concerning a supposed Hampstead pilgrimage.

The primitive way in which the surroundings of the village remained nameless resulted in this frequent use of householders' surnames for necessary purposes of identification ; thus The Pryors was merely the house and surrounding piece of Heath at the end of Well Walk, where Mr. Pryor and his family resided,¹ and Holford Road was the lane which ran between the "Upper Flask" Tavern and Hampstead Square to Mr. Holford's house.

As late as 1861 a gentleman complained to the vestry that he and others found themselves seriously inconvenienced in attempting to define any particular road in Hampstead. But, with a grace unusual in the person who complains, he also suggested remedies ; consequently we have the names of South End Road, Willow Road, Christchurch Road, East Heath Road, West Heath Road and Well Road. In the early half of the nineteenth century there were multitudinous paths through fields and open or shady places ; even in the year 1860 the length of the carriage roads measured

¹ The house has been replaced by two large mansions of flats named The Pryors.

only nineteen miles. In 1863 we read that the Spaniard's Road, across the top of the Heath, had only three naphtha lamps, and these, for the purposes of economy, might be burnt in the winter months only.

STANFIELD HOUSE.—A short distance further up the hill, on the same side as Sir Harry Vane's dwelling, we find Stanfield House, which still retains its red-tiled roof, and is now used as the Institute and Library, at the corner of Prince Arthur Road. The back of this old house looked out upon the fields which reached from the Belsize estate to the Parish Church ; there was no public access from the footpath in these fields to the High Street, and the owner of the pretty old garden allowed his friends to climb a convenient ladder over his fruit-wall, walk through the little domain, and emerge by these means on to the high road. This resident was the celebrated painter of sea subjects whose works hang in the public galleries.

Clarkson Stanfield was born in Sunderland in 1794. He came to this house in 1847, and continued to live here until 1856, so that the famous picture, exhibited in 1853, of the "*Victory* bearing the body of Nelson, being towed into the harbour at Gibraltar," must have been painted during this period, though the "*Battle of Trafalgar*," exhibited in 1836, would be finished more than ten years before he settled in Hampstead.

THE HIGH STREET.—The name of the High Street in the days of the primæval village was Kingeswelle Street, derived from the King's Well, which stood on the site of the fire station, at the juncture of Holly Hill with

Heath Street ; the well and the adjacent shed yielded a resting place for travellers and pack-horses on their way to the more ancient parish of Hendon. There is proof that the houses of Kingeswelle Street stood much further back from the road than those of the present day.

Remains of the original Kingeswelle Street houses, which preceded the eighteenth century ones of the present time, left a line of ruined hovels, thus clearly marking the more backward position of the early dwelling-places on the east side of the high road. As late as 1875-80, from the backyard of 56, Rosslyn Hill, a shed and outhouse, the last remnants of an interesting ruin, were cleared away. This was the old Chicken House.

THE CHICKEN HOUSE.—At the end of the eighteenth century this abode had sunk so low as to be used as a rendezvous and lodging-house for thieves, the proprietor of it being himself a distinguished member of that able profession. Previous to this the house, still retaining its external staircase, appears to have been a quaint and quiet farmhouse, the summer resort of Murray, afterwards Earl of Mansfield, and of other lawyers, who stayed here when visiting the chalybeate wells. Although no record is preserved of the original owner, we may assume that the Chicken House belonged to people of higher culture than that of the yeoman class, owing to the good stained-glass windows which were found, and the recorded fact of James I. and the Duke of Buckingham having stayed there. Some antiquarians call it the shooting-box of the King. Portraits of him and of the duke were represented in

coloured glass, and beneath them was an inscription in old French : " Icy dans cette chambre coucha nostre Roy Iacques premier du nom le 25^{me} Aoust 1619." Another coloured-glass subject is taken from Holy Scripture, and pourtrays the aged Simeon in the Temple, holding in his arms the Infant Christ.

Park tells us that, in 1813, these windows had been purchased by Sir Thomas Neave, and removed, with his Vane House collection, to Branch Hill Lodge.

THE FORMER VICARAGE.—We have learned, in connection with Bishop Butler and his friend, the Rev. Langhorne Warren, that the " old parsonage house lay in the High Street," and it is interesting to discover that, although under a different guise, the house, No. 28, lies in the same spot still. Opposite the end of Church Lane, which brought the vicars on their way home after emerging from Church Row, the parsonage looked towards them as they came. With new stone facing outside, and some reconstruction on the ground floor within, though the two upper storeys remain much the same, the place is now used as a branch of the London and South Western Bank. Next door to this, in the downhill direction, the red brick house, No. 28a, replaces a small outbuilding attached to the vicarage, and is thought by an old resident to have been a stable, for behind it was a square coach-yard, where it is remembered that, with the aid of a manservant and many steps, the Rev. Thomas Ainger mounted into a high old-fashioned carriage. A better conception of the parsonage house may be gained by walking a few



THE CHICKEN HOUSE



WINDOWS FROM THE CHICKEN HOUSE



yards down Gayton Road and viewing the building from the back, where only slight alterations have been made, and where the "large and beautiful garden of the parsonage" lay.

Mr. Ainger lived in the High Street Vicarage from 1841 to 1863, when he was succeeded by the Rev. Charlton Lane, who, after holding the parish living for nine years, retired in 1873 to St. John's Wood, and died there in 1875; but was buried in the Hampstead churchyard.

The position of the parsonage in the business part of the village must have proved uncongenial to Dr. White, the predecessor of Mr. Ainger, for he exchanged it for "the open country of Frognal," meanwhile giving up this official residence for the use of the curates, from 1807 to 1841. The son of a wealthy squire, and possessing considerable private means, Dr. White resided at Frognal Grove, a fine Georgian mansion near to the back of the church, now named Montagu Grove, after Edward Montagu, one of its subsequent tenants. Montagu Grove was erected by Henry Flitcroft, the builder of the church of 1747, and he was the original occupant of the house, which has been restored and preserved by its successive owners.

Concerning the date of the parsonage house, nothing definite appears to be known, but it is highly probable that, as before the Reformation the parish priest lived with the monks at the Manor House, the transition may have been direct to the village High Street after the abolition of the holy brothers, and the institution of the

new *régime*. At any rate, if the old parsonage was not built in the latter half of the sixteenth century, it bears internal signs of a period not later than the first half of the seventeenth.

The new vicarage, a large high Gothic house, standing in a secluded and beautiful garden in Redington Road, was built by the late Rev. Sherrard Burnaby, who succeeded Mr. Charlton Lane in 1873. The position of this parsonage, surrounded by tall trees, among the leafy seclusion of Frognal, in the seventies must have proved indeed a quiet contrast to the rattle and traffic of the High Street.

NORWAY HOUSE.—Gayton Road was cut, in 1865, off a portion of the orchard and playground of Norway House, a large Queen Anne square brick residence, once a “young gentlemen’s boarding school,” still standing in a little road called Burford Lane.

Almost next to the entrance to this lane is the “Bird in Hand” Tavern, which for many years was the omnibus terminus; previously, in the eighteenth century—when that inn was already two hundred years old—it was an important coaching-office, where many gay visitors alighted on their way to the Wells. But whether used for the travellers by omnibus or coach, it must necessarily be less conspicuous now that the new Tube Railway has succeeded to both, and no public conveyance can be seen on the high road of which Dr. Johnson said: “One man can learn more in a journey by the Hampstead coach than another can in making the grand tour of Europe.”

FLASK WALK.—After passing the “Bird in Hand” we come to an archway composed of two storeys overhanging a lane, and threatening to cover the ground by a fall of rotten timber and brickwork.¹ Passing beneath it, we find ourselves in a passage, on the left hand of which stand inconceivably small and old shops. On the right side the antiquarian is offended by the modern appearance of the “Flask”—a public-house which, in 1874, unpicturesquely replaced the old tavern named the “Lower Flask.”

In front of us the lane broadens out into an open space where previously stood the parish lock-up, the stocks and the cage where offenders were occasionally placed for incivility to the parson. Here the annual Fair was held ; the *Spectator* for 1712 gives notice that “The Hampstead Fair is to be kept upon the Lower Flask Tavern Walk, and holds for four days.” This festivity, like many of its kind, deteriorated and became of a disreputable nature, so that loud complaints from respectable residents ended in its total suppression in 1746.

On the left of this ground stands Rosemont House, which was the home of the married sister of Alfred, Lord Tennyson. The poet himself and his brother Charles often visited here, for their mother, Mrs. Tennyson, spent the close of her life at this, her daughter’s house, where she died in 1861 ; she was buried in the Highgate Cemetery.

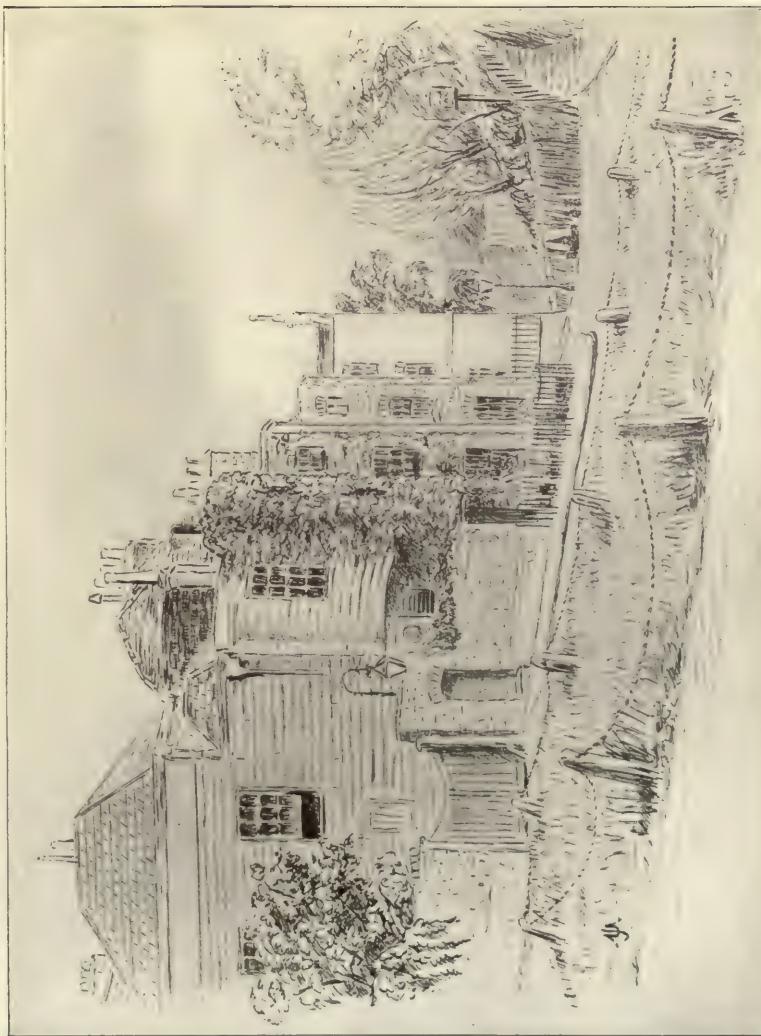
¹ This bridge of dwelling-rooms has now fallen in a heap on the ground below : Autumn, 1911.

Almost opposite to Rosemont are the iron carriage-gates of Gardnor House, still standing, but bereft of its grounds. Under the walls of this building was a spring, one of the chief sources of the river Fleet, a stream which travelled through Kentish Town, Camden Town, St. Pancras, King's Cross, Clerkenwell, Hatton Garden, Farringdon Street and Holborn Bridge, after which it joined the Thames at Blackfriars. Many water-mills and wind-mills once stood along its course, and, after passing Holborn, large ships found there sufficient depth to sail up from the Thames. Pictures of the stream as it appeared in 1862, flowing through fields in Gospel Oak, show the water to be choked up with refuse and sewerage, though pretty and rural with willow trees, cottages and hay stacks.

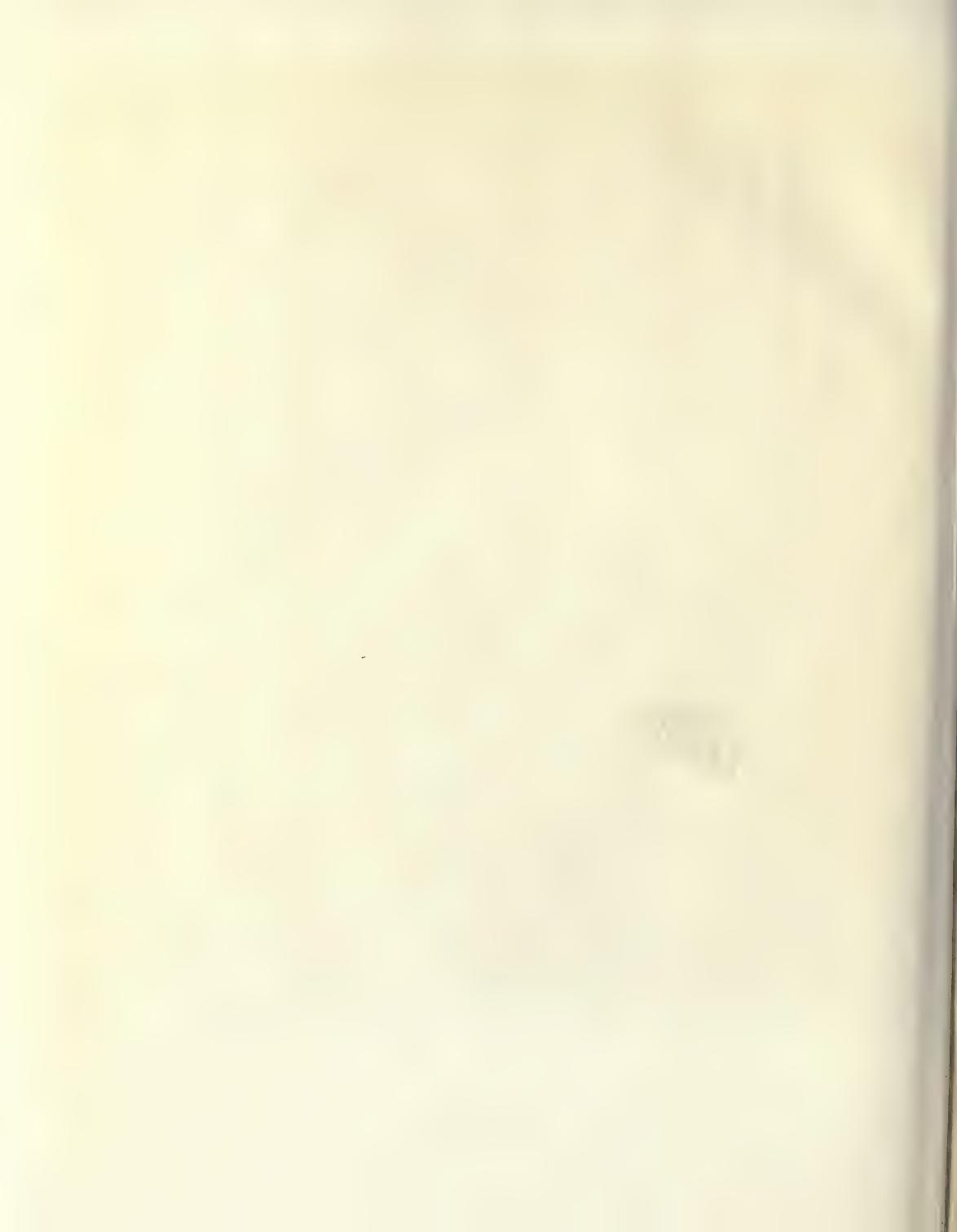
HOLLY HILL.—After retracing our steps, we finish the ascent of the High Street, and stand confronted by the Fire Brigade station, erected by public subscription, 1870-73, upon the ancient site of King's Well.

We must now follow the road behind this building, Holly Hill, where every house assures us that we are in the heart of the old village. On the right here, after the steepest of the road is surmounted, is a narrow turning, Holly Mount, which we will afterwards explore, but for the moment are arrested by the sight of a blue medallion on the wall a few yards farther on—“George Romney, born 1734, died 1802.”

There is no question as to whether this renowned portrait painter came to live on Holly Hill or not, but there has been some dispute as to whether these premises,



ROMNEY'S STUDIO, HOLLY HILL



now in the occupation of the Constitutional Club, are the remains of his dwelling, or whether that building was swept quite away.

In view of these differing opinions, therefore, we must note that the medallion is a blue one, which shows that it was placed there by the London County Council, the medallion of the Society of Arts being of a dark red. The identity of this place with Romney's studio is not endorsed by the Antiquarian meetings, nor by Mr. Potter whose knowledge of edifices is necessarily very accurate; while Mr. Edward Bell, F.S.A., who has investigated the matter most carefully says: "I have no doubt that the large room behind the Holly Bush Inn was Romney's studio." It is also very convincing to hear that an old lady of ninety years of age related how in her youth she was taken to concerts at these Assembly Rooms and that they were called Romney's old studio. A very fine room it is, more so than would appear from the exterior, with tall windows looking down on the red-tiled roofs of Heath Street, and other large windows facing Windmill Hill. Carriage gates are below, and the caretakers' dwelling-room looks into the yard not far from the original front door. Pleasant enough this spot must have been, and magnificent the view, long years before the Mount Vernon Hospital stood there, blocking out the sight of the blue Surrey hills in the distance.

GEORGE ROMNEY.—In his youth Romney showed an extraordinary talent for portraiture; after sitting in church he would return home and execute the most

striking likenesses of people whom he had seen there. His father "honest John Romney, yeoman and cabinet-maker," apprenticed him to a portrait painter named Steele, who had studied in Paris and afterwards settled down a few miles from Romney's home, a village near Kendal. While he was living under this tutelage, the young pupil was laid up with a severe illness during which time Steele went away from home. No one was left to look after the sufferer but a girl who held some domestic position in the house, and she nursed him through the fever with a care and courage which saved his life. Mary Abbot was the daughter of a respectable farmer, and when George Romney recovered he expressed his gratitude to her, and made her his wife. While travelling about in the north of England, and having plenty of commissions as portrait painter, in the pre-photographic days, he made frequent visits to Mary, bringing her a generous share of his earnings. At the end of five years he bade her good-bye, and started for London, leaving her nearly all the money he possessed to provide for their little son and daughter.

From the day he left home in the Lake district and came up to the metropolis, he started on a brilliant and successful career. The rival of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Gainsborough, he attracted attention in the highest quarters, and, having gained a money prize in connection with the Royal Academy, was willing to sacrifice the position he already enjoyed in artistic and social circles, and to leave London, appropriating this

money for the study of art in Paris and Rome. His letters from the Continent show Romney to have been gifted with keen observation and a felicitous power of expression. Also he was passionately fond of music, and made several violins, on which instrument he was an excellent performer.

Returning after some years to England, he rented a house in Cavendish Square, and there lived in what has been described as princely luxury for more than twenty years. For reasons which some think to have been actuated by personal consideration for her feelings, but which others condemn as unfaithful and heartless, he never invited the simple and homely Mary to exchange her rural life in the Lake district for the gaiety, sophistication and malice of the circle into which his fashionable portrait painting had perforce carried him.

We have indications indeed that George Romney was, himself, out of harmony with this Georgian society, and that he was constantly thinking out higher subject-matter for his art ; indeed it was with the direct object of executing these pictures that he afterwards sought the quiet retirement of Hampstead. When he was sixty-six years of age, failing in body and mind, he came to settle on Holly Hill in search of health and the fulfilment of the nobler thoughts which he had long cherished. But his depression and weakness increased, and the subject-pictures, for the execution of which he had left the town, never passed from his mind to the canvas. Thus, having spent two years on this vernal

breezy height, without gaining strength enough to use his brush, he took the coach early one morning in the last summer of the eighteenth century, and, without a word of farewell to his friends in the south, he returned to his own village home.

During the thirty-seven years since he had left it, he had visited here only twice ; and, whether by his own thoughtful provision or by the compassion of Romney the elder, Mary had lived during a great part of her husband's absence in the home of her father-in-law. On George Romney's return, this devoted woman nursed him, as she had done forty years before, with untiring and devoted affection. Two years of bodily illness and wandering mind formed the close of his life, and we are glad to know that he expressed himself tenderly grateful, because the "beautiful potentialities" which are said to have "lain within his struggling soul" had remained somewhat inactive where his domestic life was concerned. That he was not without affection for his own people may be seen from the manner in which he received his only son, a young clergyman, at the house in Cavendish Square ; also the return of his brother, Colonel Romney, from India so deeply affected the painter during his illness in his old home, that he never recovered the shock to his mind.

Thus, by his return to the north in the year 1800, Romney's studio at Hampstead was left vacant, and, in time, became appropriated to the uses of Public Assembly Rooms. Here, in the year 1833, the members

of the Scientific Society of Hampstead enjoyed a series of lectures by the great landscape painter, John Constable. Lectures were also delivered here by Faraday, Robert Owen, Nathaniel Holmes, Cruikshank, Elizabeth Fry on Prisons, and Lardner on the Steam-engine. Meetings, concerts and dances were held in these rooms until the erection of the Conservatoire in Eton Avenue and the Town Hall at the corner of Belsize Avenue, the date of the latter being 1876.

CHAPTER V

HOLLY BUSH INN
HOLLY MOUNT CHAPEL
REV. JAMES CASTLEDEN
ST. MARY'S CHAPEL
THE ABBÉ MOREL

THE PARISH CHURCH
AND MANOR
CHURCH ROW
CHURCHYARD
NEW COLLEGE

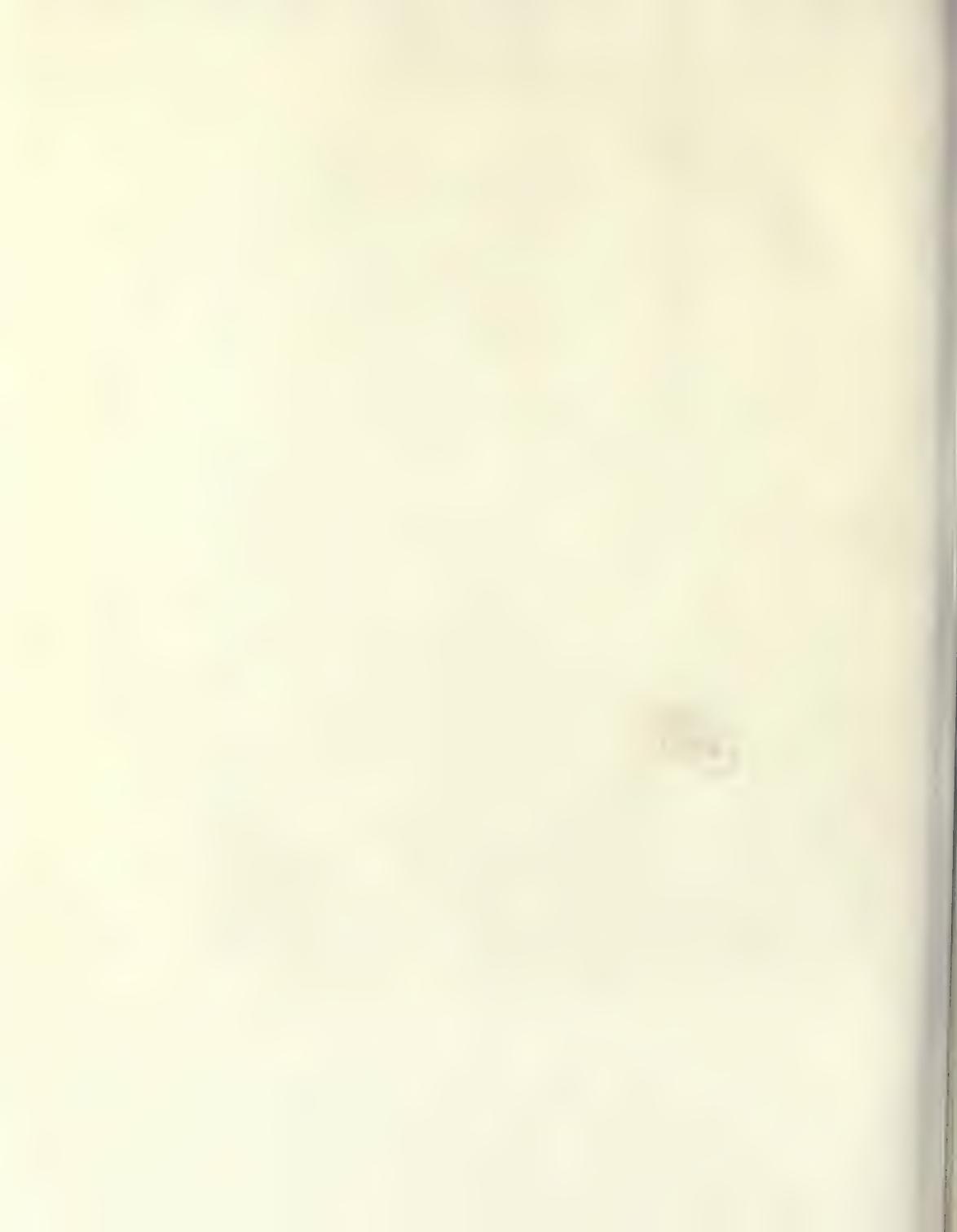
“ HOLLY BUSH ” INN.—Descending Holly Hill a few steps, and being carried by curiosity round that quiet and most quaint little corner, we come upon the entrance to the “ Holly Bush ” Inn. Retired enough in the seventeenth century, this tavern served as a place for intrigue in time of war between King and Parliament, for here Carr, Earl of Rochester, Dering and Goring planned the risings in the counties of Kent, Essex and Hertfordshire. In the eighteenth century Oliver Goldsmith and Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Gainsborough, Dr. Johnson and the ubiquitous Boswell dined at this excellent table ; and in the early nineteenth century Leigh Hunt, Charles Lamb and Coleridge ate and conversed here, when these walls listened to much wit and wisdom, and where the skill of the chef was known to be as good as any in the life of the town, from which the guests were divided by four miles of meadow land.

HOLLY MOUNT.—The houses on each side of this



HEATH STREET—UPPER END

*(From a Water-colour Drawing by Mary Hill
in the North Collection, Hampstead Town Hall)*



short lane, which ends in a *cul-de-sac*, possess the air of a day that is gone, and if, as sometimes happens, no living person is to be seen, we can feel that we are standing in a small city of the dead. Knock at an old front door, and you may be answered by ghosts of one hundred and fifty years ago, at the latest. Holly Hill was so steep a climb when we ascended it, that we are not surprised to find the gardens of the Holly Mount houses situated on the roofs of the buildings below. From "Holly Cottages," perched on a peak of the Mount, and looking down upon Heath Street, we resent the height of the clock tower on the fire station, the mansions of flats and other modern obstructions, while thinking with envy of the view which our predecessors enjoyed from this most exalted little spot in the village on the hill.

HOLLY MOUNT CHAPEL.—Late in the year of 1909, a disused little chapel in a dilapidated condition still gave a desolate and forsaken air to this quiet corner. Some old notices beside the doorway showed that these premises had been used in recent years as the printing office of *The Hampstead Record*, but they seem subsequently to have relapsed into the possession of a family of church mice. In February, however, of the following year, a second visit to this spot discovered to the view workmen busy upon the building. Assuming that their aim was destructive, it was most interesting to find, on the contrary, that they were about to convert the old place into an artist's studio, and in the early summer of the same year, 1910, the

result was a cosy picturesque object—the old brick walls being encrusted in rough-casting of a biscuit colour, and the woodwork painted green, both of which additions threw into agreeable relief the original red-tiled roof, which remained in a sufficient state of preservation overhead.

Contrary to some traditions, there is clear evidence that this chapel was the first public place of worship used by the Baptists in Hampstead, and that the small congregation which met previously in a room erected this building to hold three hundred people, and opened it in January, 1818. When their numbers became too many for this old place, the foundation stone of a new building was laid in Heath Street by Sir Morton Peto, and at the consecration of this larger place of worship the Rev. William Brock began his pastorate of forty years' duration.

It is quite true that a small chapel formerly stood in Heath Street, and was said to be of the denomination of the Countess of Huntingdon. This place was put up after Whitefield's preaching on the racecourse behind "Jack Straw's Castle," but it was not, as has been erroneously stated, the predecessor of Heath Street Chapel.

THE REV. JAMES CASTLEDEN.—The first pastor of the old Holly Mount Chapel ministered to his people there for thirty-six years; having been born at Faversham in 1778, he died at Hampstead in 1854. Mr Brock wrote of him :—

I did not know Mr. Castleden, but he must have been a man of sterling character, from the impression he made on all classes. He

had a vein of quiet humour too. The people of the Parish Church at that time seem to have respected him highly, and his own congregation held him in the utmost reverence. He was constantly about among them. His preaching must have had much quaint originality about it.

A memoir of Mr. Castleden tells us that he was brought up in his youth a strict Churchman ; we learn that, while believing strongly in prayer, he still felt it would not be effectual in lay clothes, and dressed himself in his own home "as nearly parsonic as he could," which leaves full play to our imaginations concerning the domestic nocturnal resources to simulate a surplice! The Wesleyans of Faversham felt that young Castleden's piety would be helpful in their own community, and persuaded him, when seventeen years of age, to take part in their public services. By yielding to the entreaty of this brotherhood James threw the town into an uproar, "because many friends, having regard for his reputation, were grieved at his conduct." The youth had brought the place about his ears, and had rendered his life unbearable in his native town, which he was consequently obliged to leave ; and like every young man before and after, he came up to London. When he was twenty years of age, he associated himself first with the Quakers, and afterwards with the Baptists ; into the community of the latter he was formally received at Walworth in 1799 at the age of twenty-one. He married young and married happily, and while living very simply on Holly Mount, he employed the private resources which he

possessed in the maintenance of his church ; for the rule of life among the members of this, as of most of the early Nonconformist brotherhoods, seems to have been a willing investment of material capital, rewarded by high spiritual interest. A strong religious atmosphere and purity of purpose in these hill-top meetings is quite expressive of the physical elevation upon which the temple of these earnest souls was set ; for, in words equally appropriate to the natural surroundings, we read in the memoir : "The Sun often shone bright on Holly Mount with fruitful showers and fructifying dews."

When he was seventy years old James Castleden buried his wife in the parish churchyard ; the old minister's health now declined, and, after seven years, during which he was paralysed, he followed her to the grave in 1854. His funeral sermon was preached in the chapel, and, the chief shops of the village being closed as a mark of respect to the deceased aged minister, the deacons bore his body down the hill to his last resting-place where the vicar, the Rev. Thomas Ainger, who had held him in the highest regard, read the funeral service over him. Finally this band of the faithful returned to their hill-top together and spent the evening in praising God for the serene departure of the good and faithful servant.

His tombstone may be found on the right-hand side of the front walk to the church.

THE ABBÉ MOREL, ST. MARY'S CHAPEL.—The route which the mourners took from Holly Mount, and by



THE ABBÉ MOREL



which we can follow to-day, would perchance be the narrow road leaving Mount Vernon opposite Holly Bush Hill, and, winding down into Holly Place, a leafy lane which would bring them to the entrance of the Parish Church. On their left hand, however, opposite the green hedges, stood a quiet row of dwelling-houses, one of which was the Roman Catholic presbytery, another the Orphanage of St. Vincent—these and other homes of the little Roman Catholic colony pressing close to St. Mary's Chapel in their midst. Here, near the belfry tower, the sun gleamed upon the golden-crowned statue of Virgin and Child—upon the soft Baby hands which must one day be torn by hard nails. The date below told that the Faith had been thus proclaimed since 1816, when the chapel was first opened. Previous to the consecration of this building, Mass had been said in various places, namely in a stable-loft on the Rosslyn estate ; in Oriel House, Church Row, in 1796 ; at the Clock House, afterwards called Fenton House, in the Grove ; and in a private chapel in Hampstead Square.

This, the first Roman Catholic mission in the village, was commenced by a French refugee who had escaped to England, landing on the Sussex coast, whence, after many adventures, he found his way to this secluded spot. Here two hundred of his compatriots had likewise found refuge from the uncertain fate of the Great Revolution. Father Morel, having been born in Normandy in 1766, arrived at Hampstead in 1796, a young priest of thirty years of age ; here he ministered

to the spiritual needs of those who were political emigrants like himself. Giving lessons in his own language to residents in this neighbourhood and elsewhere, saving his earnings and collecting all he could—at the end of twenty years he built this small chapel, which was followed by its surrounding institutions. This Norman priest worked for fifty-six years in Hampstead, where he made himself beloved and revered in a very wide circle. Traces of his benevolent personality are expressed in the oil-painting, a portrait of himself, which may be seen in the sacristy. On the stone floor where we stand, having entered the chapel, is an inscription respecting this aged priest of four score and six, and beneath it lies his body, which was placed there on May 1, 1852. On the north side was added, after some years, a graceful memorial tomb, where the sculptured stone figure lies at full length with the face beneficent, peaceful and at rest ; this is in the older and rather dark part in the west of the building. At the east end an extension has been made of late years by a subsequent rector, and a bazaar to defray the cost of these improvements was recently opened in May, 1909, by Lady Mary Howard, who spoke of St. Mary's, Holly Place, as " a historic church, having been founded a hundred years ago and being the mother of most other Catholic Churches in Hampstead and Highgate."

It is interesting to observe some corresponding points in the history of this chapel and that of the Baptists on Holly Mount. The two were consecrated respectively in the years 1816 and 1818. Their ministers,

the Abbé Morel and the Rev. James Castleden, each resided domestically on his sacred premises for thirty-six years ; consequently the priest who had opened his place of worship in 1816 was dead and buried beneath the floor of his chapel just two years before that little Baptist brotherhood bore their beloved pastor down the lane, passing the door of St. Mary's, on their way to the parish churchyard. There is every reason to suppose, unlikely as it would otherwise appear, that these two shepherds of Christ's flock enjoyed spiritual sympathy and converse together ; for although it was a day when the self-sufficient John Bull still despised the " frog-eating Frenchman " and a Puritan preacher was expected to denounce " Popery " in every sermon, we find one of Mr. Castleden's deacons on terms of intimacy and affection with Father Morel, who was a constant visitor at his house. Thus the deacon, Mr. Disney, was sorrowful one day over the sick cot of his peculiarly dear little son, and, when the childless priest had spoken comforting words, he knelt to pray in his colloquial Franco-English tongue. Very soon the young sufferer recovered, grew to manhood, and his daughter relates how her grandfather, in his gratitude for the spared life of his child, was said to be constantly repeating, " The fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

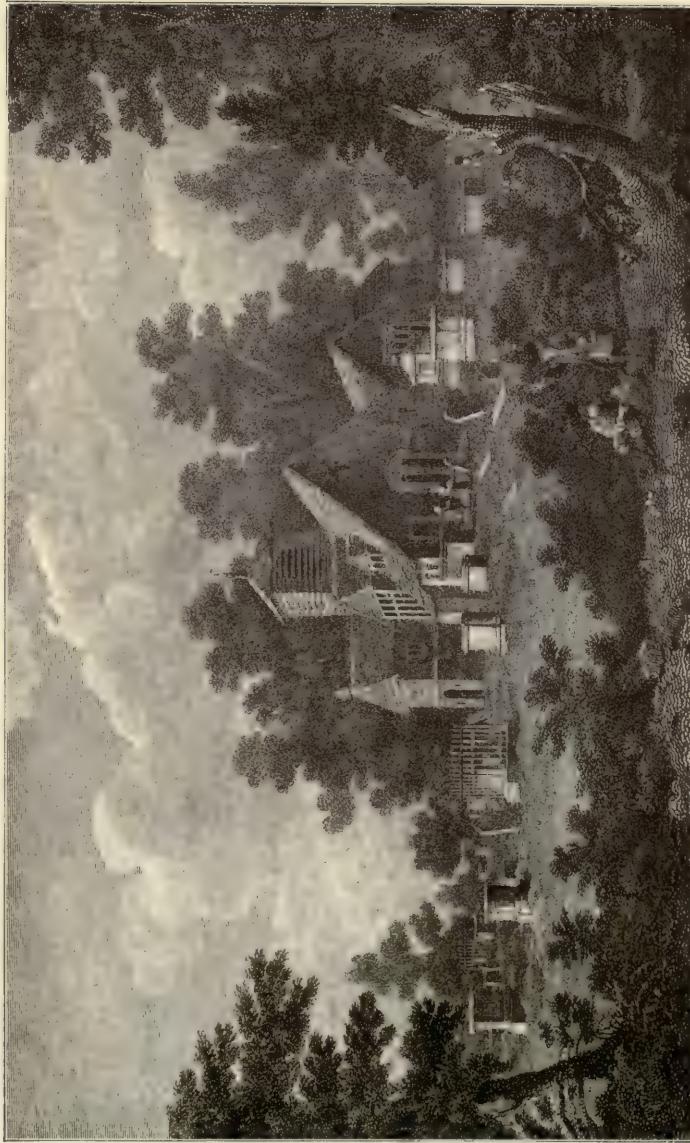
Descending from the Catholic colony in Holly Place, the narrow road is called Holly Lane, and will bring us out at the old Hampstead Church.

THE CHURCH.—The date of 1745 over the door of

the Parish Church of St. John represents the appearance of an entirely new building. The small Chapel of the Blessed Mary—*Capella Beatae Mariæ de Hamstede*, of which records may be seen in the Rolls at Westminster—was an ancient edifice of timber and stone, which had undergone many repairs at various times, but which, by the middle of the eighteenth century, was found far too small to accommodate the increased population of the parish, and too rotten in the roof and elsewhere to ensure their safety; after six centuries of service, therefore, this dilapidated building was entirely pulled down.

The date of the original chapel cannot be determined, though much research has been made on the subject of its age. It is believed, in consequence of careful study, that St. Mary's may have been founded as far back as the twelfth or thirteenth century. In the rent roll of the manor for the year 1312 is recorded "John de Neuport, Clericus," and this is the first parish priest whose name we know; the name, of course, indicating the existence of the church at that date. Another mention is made when Edward III. presented "the benefice of the chapel within the manor of Hamstede" to his chaplain, Stephen de Duddleye in 1333, and we find, later, the name of John Bastard as having been appointed curate-in-charge, that is, parish priest, in 1413.

The manor of Hamstede, as well as the church standing upon it, was the property of the monks of Westminster from the year 986 until the Dissolution



ST MARY'S, HAMPSTEAD PARISH CHURCH (Previous to 1745)



of the Monasteries in 1539. When visiting their domain, the abbots stayed at the Hall Grange, or Manor House, where the parish priest lived, and where the monks stayed and received guests in monastic hospitality. This building stood, in its day, at the corner of what is now Frogнал Lane, formerly called West End Lane. The Manor House lay in the midst of its domain lands, and faced toward Frognal, where stood also the chief door of the church, with its wooden tower at the west end of the building ; these faced the Manor House on the opposite side of the road ; the chancel at the east end at that time lay in the direction of the village. Near at hand on the north side lay Windmill Hill, where the agricultural tenants took their corn to grind, before carrying it to be garnered for their ecclesiastical landlords at the Hall granaries. Descending from the windmill to the Grange, the peasants must pass by North Wood, which was a growth of oaks belonging to the monks, and memorialised in modern days by the name of Oak Hill Park. When the trees of the North Wood were cut down in 1470 by the man who rented the land, the monks obliged him to leave fifty of them standing upon it, and we may reasonably consider that the remaining oaks were the ancestors of the few which may still be found there in this year of our Lord 1912.

The Frogнал brook ran down the decline into the cattle pond, which lay between the church and the Hall Grange. This probably was the pond which was enclosed in the grounds of St. Basil's Hall, the house

at the back of the present church, and where the willow trees still remain which once bent over the water. Another pond existed at the foot of Mount Vernon, the spot being marked by a willow which stands in the road. A third Frognal pond was in the grounds of the house called the Mansion, which, in the seventeenth century, was called Cole's Pond, Cole being the name of the owner of the Mansion at that time. With so much water in this part of the parish we need not be surprised to learn—from an antiquary once living in Frognal House—that the name of this district was anciently derived from Frog Hall, originally spelt in the Saxon “Frogen Hall,” thus accounting for the letter “n” in Frognal. There are several instances in the name places of rural England showing the quaint facetious spirit, as in the name Mockbeggar Hall, etc., the Frog places being quite numerous, a notable instance being Frogmore at Windsor.

To conceive of Hamstede in mediæval times, it is necessary to reconstruct our feeling concerning the relative position of the church to the village, and to place Frognal as by far the most important part of the parish. Here the monks acted as landlords and general authorities, being in every respect the persons of greatest account on the whole manor, the Hall Grange serving as police court, town hall, hospital and hotel. It was the monks also who kept the domain land in good working order, who dictated the farming arrangements and made the peasants labour under their governance and direction, the bailiff rendering to the prior at

Michaelmas an account of the yearly expenses. It was the monks, moreover, to whom belonged the benefice of the little church, and theirs the privilege of appointing a curate-in-charge, to whom was allotted the stipend of £10 a year. This must be remembered, for reasons which will immediately appear.

About the middle of the fifteenth century these holy brothers found themselves extremely short of money, and, being unwilling to waste the annual £10 upon a parish priest of their own if they could manage instead to steal one from a neighbouring church, they took a course quite unprecedented and illegal, by which they were able to serve the Hampstead cure from another source, and keep the allotted endowment for themselves. Hence we see that the records of Hendon from 1461-77 show that the lay rectors of that ancient benefice were ordered to provide a chaplain who should serve the needs of Hendon, coupled with Hampstead. Thus, at the institution of three successive Hendon priests, which took place between the years 1461 and 1477, Evans's history of Hendon quotes their orders "to serve also the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin at Hamstede." Thus, for this period of time, the monks here laid their obligation upon the rectors of Hendon, but the parish church of Hampstead continued in every other respect to fulfil its own ordinances, with its churchwardens, vestry meetings, and the celebration of all its own sacraments, as it had done before, and continued to do after this otherwise irregular proceeding. The parish of Hampstead, as can be fully proved,

is an "ancient parish" and the error into which nearly all historians have fallen as to its having been a mere chapelry of Hendon must have been caused by this circumstance. The mystery, however, is now elucidated by the careful research of Col. Kennedy, of Frognal Lane, who shows that, after the discontinuance of this crafty method, Hampstead parish church simply returned to its former condition, and was not, as has been said, created for the first time in 1477. After this lapse it continued to be supplied from its rightful source with a priest of its own, and, as in the case of every other ancient parish church, it was a self-sufficient living, in no sense a chapelry dependent on a mother church.

After the Dissolution of the Monasteries, Henry VIII. created out of the ruins of the convent at Westminster a new diocese, which covered the county of Middlesex, and, among other property which went to compose this new bishopric, was the manor and living of Hampstead. The new bishop, Thirlby, who held the gift, did not appoint a vicar, but retained the cure himself: therefore the duty of Hampstead church was now presumably taken by the bishop's chaplain, or even occasionally by Thirlby himself.

The bishopric of Westminster, however, lasted only ten years, and in 1551 the presentation of the living, as also the manor of Hampstead itself, was given by King Edward VI. to a layman called Wroth—a favourite gentleman-attendant of his young Majesty's. Since that time it has remained in the hands of laity,

all connection with Westminster having ceased. The sub-manor of Belsize, "lying within the manor of Hamstede" was, however, independent of it, and remained the property of Westminster Abbey until 1887, when the dean and chapter sold it to the Charity Commissioners.

The small church of St. Mary saw many changes during the two hundred years of life which it was to experience under lay patrons and the new system of religion. Many restorations of the old stone and timber were necessary ; but even after the addition of galleries and of pews in the chancel the number of seats only amounted to 366, whereas in the year 1700 the population had already reached 1,800, and by the middle of the century had increased to 3,000, exclusive of course of summer visitors, who came in great numbers to the neighbourhood ; and this shows us how necessary must have been, as a chapel of ease, the Episcopal chapel in Well Walk. The village, which, in the early days of the monks, had consisted of a single street, Kingeswelle Street, had now grown into a small township.

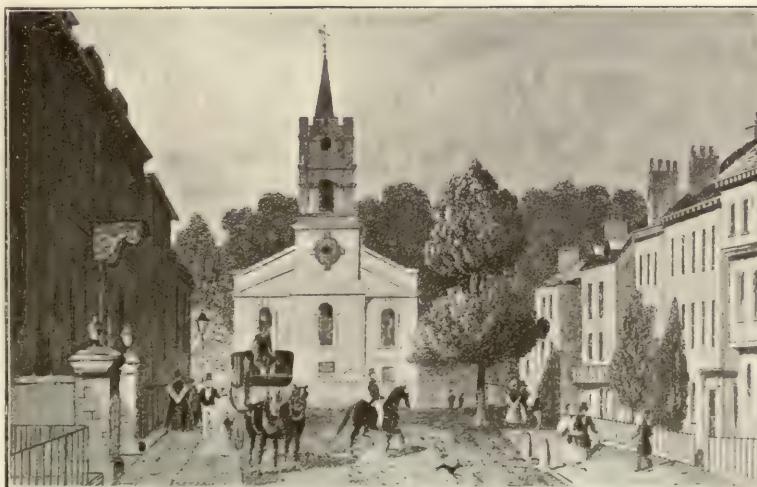
In 1707 the wealthy Sir William Langhorne, an East India merchant, became Lord of the Manor by purchase from the third Earl of Gainsborough, and to Sir William Langhorne the parishioners appealed, in 1709, to build them a new church. They apparently met with small encouragement at that time, but at his death in 1715 he bequeathed to them a thousand pounds towards their object. In 1744, when the old church had become so dangerously rotten that neither parishioners nor visitors

would enter it, and after the committee had made an unsuccessful appeal to Parliament, they started a subscription list in the parish with this legacy, which was already available. They obtained a donation from the new owner of the manor, namely Mrs. Margaret Maryon, another also from the vicar, the Rev. Langhorne Warren, with fifteen guineas from their church-warden, who was host of the "Lower Flask" Tavern ; and seeing that their other subscriptions amounted to £1,750, the painful but necessary plan of pulling down the tottering old sanctuary was put into action.

The new church of St. John at Hampstead was consecrated on October 8, 1747, by the Dean of Llandaff, and although at that date it was constructed to hold only 700 people, it has since, after many alterations and enlargements, grown capable of seating 1,600. The surprising phenomenon concerning the building, as we see it to-day, is that the chancel, like that of few other churches, is to be found at the west end. True, Henry Flitcroft, the architect of 1747, placed the altar at the east end, as it had previously stood in the chapel of St. Mary ; but unlike that ancient predecessor, this new church possessed also on the same spot, its chief entrance doors, and this for the following reason. The Hampstead population had greatly enlarged on the village side of the parish, and Frognal, though still the home of the Lord of the Manor, was no longer the seat of ecclesiastical authority, as it had been in the days when the parish priest lived at the Hall Grange. The vicars now took up their abode in the High Street, and



THE PARISH CHURCH (rebuilt 1747)



CHURCH ROW



the centre of interest lay in the town. Church Row had also now come into existence, and the architect of the church thought well to avoid for the townsfolk the inconvenience of the narrow lane and toll-gate which barred the way to the west end : he chose to facilitate the arrival of the congregation by placing the entrance doors at the east end, one on each side of the Communion Table—there was no chancel in this new church of 1747, and there were no choir seats save those in the gallery. The ironwork which formed a railing and gates around the Communion Table stood out in the broad aisle, the exterior line of the building remaining unbroken. The middle entrance had not then been called into existence; a blank wall, only, stood in the place of it.

But however convenient it might have been for the parishioners to arrive by east doors, it did not prove equally agreeable to the clergy to have their vestry and altar on the same spot, and for them consequently to be mingled with the crowd. After various methods had been tried and proved unsatisfactory, the only practical solution was found to be in a complete internal transformation, by which the altar should stand at the west end. And here a chancel was added, being built out towards Frognal. Choir seats were now introduced, and it became necessary for the pews and congregation to be made to face west.

It must have been at this time also that the original pews of 1747 were abolished. The writer remembers, as a small child in 1870, standing on a seat in order to

see over the top of the very high pews which obstructed all vision ; thus during the preaching, reading and prayers the congregation apparently did not exist ; during the singing they possessed shoulders and heads only. The Rev. Charlton Lane alone could be seen in a lofty pulpit, black-gowned for the sermon, behind a big velvet cushion with a sounding-board overhead. In the galleries where the window seats are deep, owing to the thickness of the walls, servants of the representative families, and people of the "poorer sort" had their uncomfortable church sittings ; if the square pews below were unoccupied, those pew doors remained locked throughout the service. Soldiers' and sailors' orphans came from their neighbouring institutions, and in their scarlet and blue occupied the front seats of the galleries. The walls of the church were plain white, broken only by the sepulchral-looking black and white memorial tablets which hung upon them. The windows were all of plain glass with small panes. Happily, we children could see through these the restless flitting of sparrows constantly fussing in and out of the ivy, which surrounded the window frames, and the lively little creatures in the open sunshine spoke of a larger freedom and fresh air than that of the stuffy solemnity which pervaded the interior.

Concerning the churches old and new, viz., those of St. Mary and St. John, it will help us to realise the continuity of Christian teaching and worship on this spot, to read the names and dates of the list of vicars which hangs in the present church porch. These

names, as complete as can be made from records extending from the fourteenth to the present century, will be found on two upright boards, while the Latin inscription is on an oblong board bearing the coat of arms: the translation of the latter is as follows:—

I have considered the days of old, and the years of eternity have
I kept in remembrance.

If the sacred associations of the place so move thee that thou desire to know something of the men who spoke the word of God to our forefathers, stay and read the names of the Rectors and Vicars of this Church, formerly the Chapel of the Blessed Mary. Deriving its origin from the Monastery of Westminster, it became a chapel of the church of Hendon, but was presently restored in 1540 into the hands of the Bishop of Westminster. And when the edifice was rebuilt, it was most happily consecrated to St. John of Hampstead on the 8th day of October, 1747, a notable and auspicious day worthy to be kept in perpetual honour. Certain names are wanting: their memory has perished indeed upon earth, but lives and shines among the inhabitants of Heaven.

Conspicuous in the list ranging from 1315 to the present day, is the name of the Rev. Robert Warren, D.D., who died in 1740, at the age of sixty, and was buried in Hampstead churchyard. The Rev. Robert was the first of three generations of Warrens who held the living in succession. He was a graduate of Christ's College, Cambridge, and before the age of twenty-nine had been made rector of Worthington in Suffolk and of Charlton in Kent, after which he was rector of St. Mary, Stratford, Bow. Stout, robust and energetic, this potentate kept a school, published very many volumes of his sermons, upheld authority and State religion, while bristling with

controversy against Dissenters, and acted as a frankly egoistic, able, Queen Anne parson. The expression of his portrait, as he is doubling his large under-chin, and glancing critically out of the corners of his eyes, declares him to be on the look-out for offenders, and assures us that these will have their ears soundly boxed for the praise and glory of God. Dr. Warren's step-daughter became the second Lady Langhorne, and mistress of the Manor House ; his own son was named Langhorne, after the Lord of the Manor.

The Rev. Langhorne Warren, at the time of his father's death, was vicar of Dedham, Essex, but in addition to this he was presented to the living of Hampstead by the Lady of the Manor, Mrs. Margaret Maryon, a distant cousin of his late patron, Sir William Langhorne, who had, as we have seen, married the step-sister of the Rev. Langhorne Warren. It was during the incumbency of the latter that the demolition and rebuilding of the church took place, and shortly before that time we find him the neighbour and friend of Dr. Butler, at that date Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, and owner of Vane House. Langhorne Warren lived until 1762, dividing his time between Dedham and Hampstead, and was buried in the churchyard of the latter, being succeeded in this parish by his son.

The Rev. Erasmus Warren was extremely young when, in 1782, he took charge of the parish, which charge he retained for a longer period than any other Hampstead vicar, though he was unable, during the last twenty-two years of his life, to execute any of the

duties attaching to it, having suffered an attack in the head (1784) which permanently impaired his reason. The Rev. Charles Grant, his senior curate, seems to have been a good and capable man, and able to supply all that was necessary under the inconvenient circumstance of the vicar's retaining his living after he had ceased to retain his reason. Mr. Grant was proprietor also, for thirty years, of the Episcopal chapel in Well Walk. Erasmus Warren died in December, 1806, and was buried in Hampstead churchyard, though no word can be found concerning him on any gravestone. The chief things which seem to have distinguished his tenure of the living while he was in health and activity were the large number of quarrels which he had with the trustees of his church, and the large number of children which filled the parsonage.

The Rev. Thomas Ainger, M.A., was instituted in March, 1841, and remained vicar for twenty-two years, during which time he did an immense amount of good in the parish ; he spoke well, and was a man of much action, he had a heart for the poor, and a brain to devise means for the good of all. The present parish schools were of his building, though improved by two subsequent vicars. The dispensary also was due to Mr. Ainger, and a bust of him appropriately stands there as its founder. The church, which in the earlier years of his time still seated only 700 people, was afterwards enlarged at a cost of over £3,000.

A new population was at this time beginning to spring up, for London was already spreading itself over

the fields of St. John's Wood, where the forest had, years ago, disappeared, and the farm had been recently abolished. Thus the tide of bricks and mortar rose and overflowed into the southern part of Hampstead ; Adelaide Road and others appearing in 1845, being followed by Belsize Park. To the disinterested vicar it appeared that district parishes must be carved out of the mother parish, and portions out of the vicar's stipend must help to support them. The Parliamentary Act of 1839 covered the growing necessity, and in no neighbourhood was it more beneficial than in that of Hampstead. In 1848 a local congregation was formed, and a temporary place of worship opened, as the result of which St. Saviour's Church, Eton Road, was finished and consecrated in 1856. This was the first parish belonging to the new order of things, with the exception of Christ Church, which in 1842 had come into parochial existence out of the Episcopal chapel of ease, the growth of which is traced in the account of the chalybeate wells.

In 1856 was consecrated also the church of St. Paul's, Avenue Road, erected almost on the boundary of the parish.

In 1857 St. Mary's, Kilburn, was built in the fields at the end of Abbey Road.

In 1859, St. Peter's, Belsize, rose up on the site of the demolished Manor House, at the beginning of the avenue which had extended from the mansion to the high road ; the park of more than two hundred acres being in process of transformation into roads. Dr. Trem-

lett, the original vicar of St. Peter's, Belsize, remains in possession of the cure until the present time, in 1912, having celebrated the jubilee of his incumbency in 1909.

The addition of these new churches to the parish of Hampstead was one of the many enterprises with which Mr. Ainger filled his twenty-four years. He was made prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1859, and died in Hampstead in 1863, where he lies under a marble slab and a full-length sculptured cross in the south part of the churchyard. A tablet of various coloured marbles, bearing an excellent medallion portrait of Mr. Ainger and an appreciative inscription by devoted parishioners, was erected on the east wall of the church, and is found immediately on our right after entering the chief door; a newspaper of that date, still preserved, describes the situation as the north side of the altar, which was at that time correct, the tablet remaining in its original position, but the altar having been since removed to the further end of the building.

It was shortly after 1873 that the historical vicarage was abandoned in the High Street, and the new one in Redington Road, Frognal, built and occupied. It was moreover in 1878 that the altar was moved to the west end of the church, and the chancel and two new vestries were built. The decoration of the chancel, the new organ, the choir stalls and the west windows were all given by Mr. R. H. Prance of Frognal House, the organ being first used on Easter Day, 1884. It was during this period of parochial history that the mission room was built, and the parish schools enlarged.

The Rev. Brook Deedes, M.A., the present vicar and the Rural Dean of Hampstead, instituted November, 1900, was educated at Harrow and Oxford. He was the first Archdeacon of Lucknow, where he spent many years of active life and constructional diocesan work. Mr. Deedes had returned from India only three years at the time of the retirement of the Rev. Sherrard Burnaby, the previous incumbent, and had spent those years, by choice, in the quiet country parish of Hawk-hurst, in Kent.

CHURCH Row.—From the church porch, where we stood to read the names of the vicars, we walk out through the dark yews and cedars of the churchyard into Church Row, a spot which still speaks of old world repose, which during the early childhood of the writer remained a private road, with a select and secluded air ; from the end of the Row, gates had of late been removed which had divided it from the village. This quiet road was bordered on the north side by Holly Hill, and on the south by the open fields, which spread, a green sloping expanse, from the back of the red roofs of High Street on the east, to the hawthorn hedges of Finchley Road where no houses stood, and over the Kilburn meadows as far as Edgware Road, on the west.

The serene and unchanging Church Row has been cruelly invaded at the north corner by a block of new flats where stood, until the end of the nineteenth century, a high square house more than two hundred years old, surrounded by beech trees and a mossy brick garden-wall. In spite of this modern anachronism the

quaint street still preserves its personality and serves as a picture of the past. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, Church Row was a fashionable rendezvous and promenade for the visitors at the chalybeate wells. We can readily believe, when we hear it related, that sedan chairs lingered here later than in any other part of London, for the innate conservatism of this venerable street decreed that they should ; and some of the link-extinguishers, by a natural law, remained outside those highly respectable front doors for eighty years after link lights had ceased to be used. The familiar voice of the old watchman, with his slow step on the cobble-stoned side path, still seems to cry in the dark night, " All's well," and though he, with his lantern and watch-box, has long ceased to be, they have left the emphasis of their absence behind. Everything in its turn appears and is gone, the houses folk live in, the fields they walk in, and the trees which they love fall down before the scythe of Time ; for the clock below the belfry window

Beats out the little lives of men.

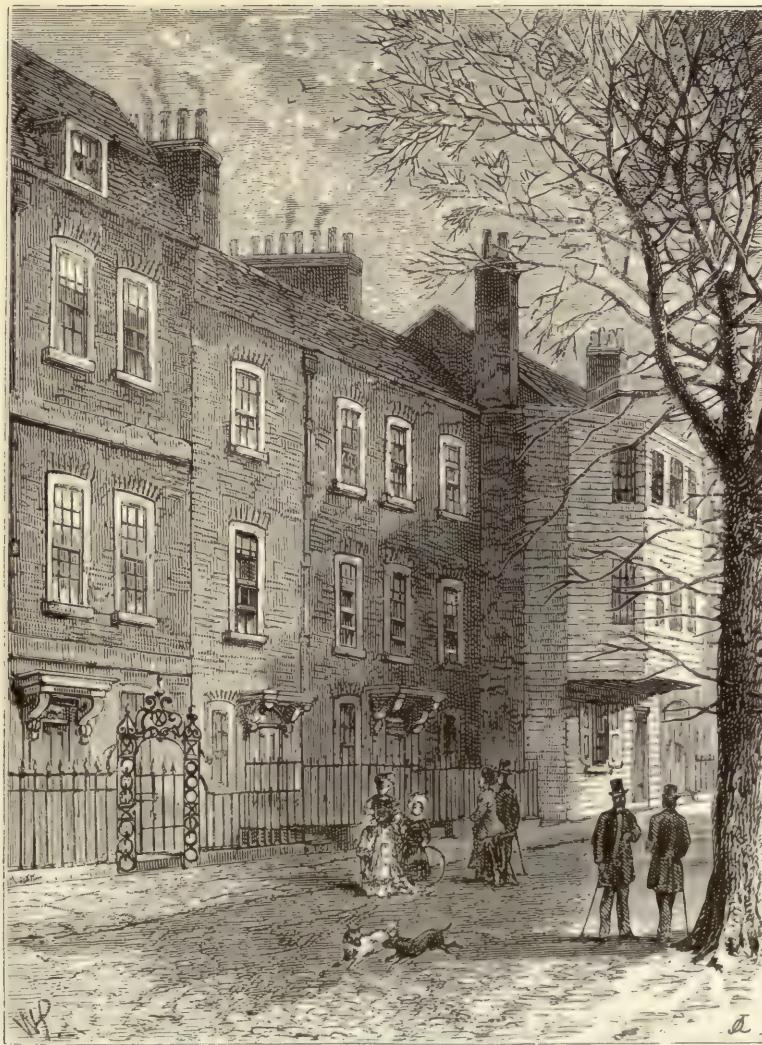
DEAN SHERLOCK.—In 1707, in one of these Queen Anne houses, lived a keen lover of Hampstead, a Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, and Master of the Temple. People did not forget how, when he had refused, it was by his wife only that he would be persuaded to take the oath of allegiance to the monarchs William and Mary ; and when Mrs. Sherlock walked abroad with her husband, the village residents pointed him out,

saying : “ There goes Dean Sherlock, with his reason for taking the oath on his arm.”

He died in Church Row, in 1707, and was buried in St. Paul’s Cathedral ; his chief literary and theological work was a publication called “ *The Practical Treatise of Death.* ”

At No. 8, Church Row, a house with a high iron gate, lived Mrs. Anna Barbauld from 1785 to the end of the century. She remained in Hampstead until 1802, but towards the close of her time here occupied a house on Red Lion Hill. Her husband, the Rev. Rochemont Barbauld, was minister of the old Unitarian chapel in that part which was afterwards named Rosslyn Hill.

Mrs. Barbauld was the only daughter of Dr. Aikin, a man of considerable scholarship, and she derived her mental inheritance from him ; her education was also more masculine than was customary for a woman in the middle of the eighteenth century, for her surroundings lent themselves to it, her father being classical tutor at the theological college at Warrington, and keeping, moreover, a boys’ school of his own ; she had no sister, and to her brother, John Aikin, M.D., she was bound by literary companionship and love all her life. She was passionately fond of teaching and of young things, and thus became a voluntary assistant with her father’s pupils. This proved to be a quality useful of development, for after 1774, the date of her marriage, she and her husband the pastor, both of whom possessed more wisdom than wealth, established a “ *select* ” boarding-school in their new home at Diss, where they



MRS. BARBAULD'S HOUSE—8, CHURCH ROW
(In the foreground)

taught and trained the sons of strictly select families. And here it is a happy picture to see this intellectual and fascinating woman of thirty years of age, a "school ma'am" of a new and human type, different indeed from the pattern of her day, the comrade and friend of her pupils ; a feminine forerunner of Arnold, and in her method of youth development a very Mrs. Pestalozzi ! Among the grown pupils who in later life expressed their gratitude to her were Lord Denman, Lord Chief Justice, and Sir William Gell the antiquary ; others were Basil, Lord Daer, the Earl of Selkirk and two more brothers, making four from the same family, Lord More and Lord Aghrim, brothers, and the Hon. Augustine Phipps. For these she would organise dramatic performances, and would find time outside of her literature and school-teaching to make "paper-plumes, ruffs and collars." While living in this Suffolk home, the Barbaulds were in the habit of taking coach to London during the infrequent school vacations, and there they visited Joseph Johnson, Mrs Barbauld's publisher in St. Paul's Churchyard, and Mrs. Montagu, at which two houses they met all the literati of the day. Dr. Samuel Johnson, who had bestowed small favour upon Mrs. Barbauld's writings, because they were too intellectual for a woman, was good enough to see self-sacrifice in her retirement from society, where she was counted a distinctly literary celebrity, to the seclusion of the distant pastorate home and her young charges, in Suffolk.

Anna Barbauld's first book of poems was published

in 1773, when she was still Miss Aikin ; but her " Hymns in Prose for Children " and " Early Lessons " were written for her pupils after her marriage. In " Evenings at Home " she collaborated with her brother, John Aikin. Her volume of poems, published in 1778, went through four editions in a year, and was highly extolled by Charles James Fox, Wordsworth and Garrick. In her critical essays and writings, theology, forms of religion, morals and manners, Anna Barbauld was much influenced by the society she had left in her old home, where her father was an intimate friend of Dr. Priestley, Dr. Enfield, and especially of Dr. Doddridge, who lived for some time in the Aikin household. Mrs. Barbauld's mind was logical, broad and in advance of her day ; her utterances on Calvinism were courageous prophecies of a later and saner evolution of thought. The seriousness of these subjects for a woman had probably been the cause of that offence in Dr. Johnson's mind ; for this literary lion could see no objection to a female writer when Miss Fanny Burney published her work of fiction, a style of writing which did not trespass upon masculine preserves. Anna Barbauld's edition of Richardson's letters and, in a separate volume, her biography of that novelist were produced soon after she left Hampstead.

It was to Newington Green Chapel that Mr. Barbauld was appointed pastor in 1802. This neighbourhood was also chosen that they might be near Dr. Aikin, their brother, in his medical practice. With him the authoress worked as joint editor and, having now no

school duties, was able to devote herself, not only to literature, but to her husband's physical and mental health. At this time she published a collection of chosen essays from the *Spectator*, the *Tatler*, the *Guardian*, and the *Freeholder*, and added to these an original introduction.

Rochemont Barbauld, who came to Church Row in 1785, died at Stoke Newington in 1808. He was an Englishman of French Protestant descent, though he happened to have been born in Germany on account of his parents' temporary residence at Cassel, his father being chaplain to George II., who was visiting the town at that time. Rochemont seems to have been slight, sensitive and well-bred, with a high-pitched voice and much conversation, especially on religious controversial points. He became friends with Miss Anna Letitia Aikin when he was a theological student in the college at which her father was tutor, and where he would be under the training also of the Rev. Dr. Priestley and his colleagues.

When Crabb Robinson visited the Barbaulds in 1805, he said of the authoress : "She bore the remains of great personal beauty, she had a brilliant complexion, light hair, blue eyes and a small elegant figure; her manners were agreeable, with something of the generation departed." Miss Fanny Burney speaks of Mrs. Barbauld's "set smile, her air of determined complacency and prepared acquiescence, also a sweetness which never risks being off its guard." Mrs. Chapone said of her to Miss Burney : "She is

a very good young woman, as well as replete with talent, but why must one always smile so?" Crabb Robinson saw Mrs. Barbauld again years after her husband's death, and describes how she retained the strong sweet calm of her former character. Anna Barbauld continued in her widowhood to occupy herself with poetry and prose; in the year of her husband's death she produced an "In Memoriam" concerning him, and two years later, in 1810, published an edition of the British novelists. She lived until March, 1825, which was the eighty-third year of her life, and it was not long before this time that she wrote a poem which is still remembered, though so many of her works have necessarily become obsolete, owing to the changed conditions of society and the later developments of literature. At eighty-two she writes:—

Life, we've been long together
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather.

Then steal away, give little warning.
Choose thine own time,
Say not Good night, but, in some brighter clime,
Bid me Good morning.

In addition to the memories of literature which hang about No. 8, Church Row, this house may be sacred to many for the following important association mentioned by Mrs. Barbauld in her correspondence. A Spaniard who was staying here at the time astounded his hostess by introducing "tobacco leaf rolled up of the length of one's fingers, which is lighted and smoked without a

pipe." She adds that, to avoid alarming the pastor, "the Don keeps it snug in his own room." She wonders if any of her friends, too, ever saw a "seguar."

MISS LUCY AIKIN.—Twenty-two years after Mrs. Barbauld had left this house it was taken by her relatives, Mrs. and Miss Aikin, the widow and daughter of John Aikin, M.D. In 1830, when Mrs. John Aikin died, her daughter removed to No. 18, Church Row, on the opposite side of the road, and here she continued her literary life until 1844, when she left Hampstead for a period of nearly twenty years. She went to live in London, and afterwards at Wimbledon, with her niece Mrs. le Breton, *née* Aikin. In 1863 Mr. and Mrs. le Breton came to live at Milford House, John Street (now called Keats' Grove), and with them the old maiden aunt, Miss Aikin, who died in the following year, aged 83. She was buried close to her old friend Joanna Baillie, in the Hampstead churchyard.

The chief of Miss Aikin's literary works were historical and biographical, like those of her father, who had written "Annals of the Reign of George III.," and who, besides numerous other original productions, compiled a biographical dictionary consisting of ten volumes, upon which he was at work, during whatever leisure his medical practice afforded him, for nineteen years.

Lucy Aikin published a life of her father, with selections from his many writings ; a life of her mother ; one also of her aunt, Mrs. Barbauld ; and one of herself. She was the author of "Memoirs of the Courts of Queen Elizabeth, of James I., and of Charles I." This work was

published in six volumes, and occupied her for fifteen years, namely, from 1818 to 1833. It was very warmly commended by Lord Macaulay. Her "Life of Joseph Addison," however, which was the subject of Macaulay's famous essay, was criticised by him with some severity, concerning the accuracy of its dates and events ; he also remarked : " Miss Aikin wrote about Queen Elizabeth because she had something to say about her, but she said something about Addison because she had to write about him." Concerning this work, however, an American writer truly says : " The character of Addison has never before been set in so favourable a light."

A most interesting pencil portrait of Miss Aikin was drawn by her brother Edmund Aikin, the architect, and from this likeness we learn what an exceptionally good-looking lady Miss Aikin must have been. This little sketch by Edmund Aikin has lately been added to the Parish Church collection.

JOHN JAMES PARK.—At the same house, No. 18, lived Thomas Park, engraver, antiquary and poet, born 1759 ; also his son John James, born 1793, who, while a law-student of twenty years old, wrote the first history of Hampstead, publishing the original edition in 1813, and the second edition in 1814. In compiling this work the young enthusiast appears to have been thoroughly serious in his research of facts, but nevertheless he met with some official snubbing in reply to his courteous request to be allowed to examine the Rolls at Westminster. Perhaps it was part of the

dignity of a Dean of Westminster to discountenance an amateur historian, however conscientious his literary method. When Park had succeeded in obtaining his information it was the Catholic priest at Hampstead who helped him in his difficulties by translating the ecclesiastical Latin of the Westminster Records where it differed from the more familiar Latin of the youth's legal and other studies ; the author acknowledges, in one of his prefaces, the assistance thus given by Father Morel. John James Park died in 1833, when he was forty years of age.

WILKIE COLLINS.—No. 25, Church Row, was occupied for some time by Wilkie Collins, the novelist, whose father, Collins the painter, named him after his friend Wilkie, the well-known artist.

MISS GILLIES.—This house was also the home of the Misses Gillies, one of whom was a well-known writer of stories for children. The other, Miss Margaret, was a constant exhibitor at the Old Society of Painters in Water Colour, of which she was a member, and where her pictures appeared in 1850 and onward. In her youth, Miss Margaret visited much at Rydal Mount, and there painted Wordsworth's portrait. An intimate friendship with her neighbour, Canon Ainger, delighted her last days in Hampstead.

Twenty-eight years, towards the close of her long life, were spent in Church Row, and we may remark that, dying at the age of eighty-two, she made one of the many Hampstead ladies who outlived their four-score years. Among these were Miss Lucy Aikin,

Mrs. Barbauld and Mrs. Dorothea Baillie, as well as this lady's two daughters, who attained to their fourscore and ten, one of them indeed, exceeding it, and becoming a centenarian.

Miss Gillies' death took place in the year 1887.

BISHOP SELWYN.—A hundred years after the death of Dean Sherlock in Church Row, there was born near the same spot a pioneer missionary, who was one of the greatest men of the nineteenth century. The parish registry records the baptism of George Augustus Selwyn on July 7, 1809, his father, William Selwyn, K.C., being a member of the congregation at Hampstead Church. The boy lived at No. 21, Church Row, from 1813 to 1817.

He was consecrated Bishop in 1841, when he had only two years previously attained to the canonical age, namely thirty ; and, characteristic of the man whose only word was Duty, he readily left the Church and society in England which offered him a life highly congenial to his taste and capacities, and, with a self-sacrifice which was not always considered a necessary part of Christianity in those days, went out to his huge undertaking in the crude and raw colony of New Zealand. From this place in 1849 he sailed in his mission yacht *Undine* on his first voyage to Melanesia.

A variety of ceaseless personal activities continued for twenty-seven years, by which time seven bishoprics had been established, and Selwyn, visiting England, was with difficulty persuaded to accept the bishopric of Lichfield. But he first returned to New Zealand,

to take leave of his work there ; and among other great influences of his farewell sermon in 1868, was the voluntary self-dedication of young Coleridge Patteson, who became Bishop of Melanesia, but was afterwards murdered by some of the natives in one of the South Sea Islands.

The Selwyn centenary was celebrated in Hampstead in July, 1909, not on the date of the missionary's birth, but on that of his baptism, when the parish expressed her pride in the babe who had become so great a bishop.

AUSTIN DOBSON.—Among other people of interest Austin Dobson, in the middle of the nineteenth century, lived in Church Row, and, with his exquisite sensibility to the spirit of the eighteenth century, composed amid these suitable surroundings many of his "old school" essays, biographies, poems and other works. Austin Dobson was born in 1840 ; his anonymous volume of poems, published in 1873, attracted strong and generous praise from George Eliot, and quickly passed through three editions. His biography of Hogarth was published in 1891, that of Richardson in 1902, and that of Fanny Burney in 1903.

DU MAURIER.—Toward the close of the sixties, George du Maurier, who afterwards took New Grove House, in connection with which he is recalled at greater length, resided in the Row, and developed here his charming skill as a black and white artist.

H. G. WELLS.—In the beginning of the twentieth century these placid old walls, once so exclusive, with their toll-bar, their "No public traffic" and their

dedication to things of the past, now hold one whose writings resound with an original and vigorous note of the future. Mr. H. G. Wells, of astronomic-nightmare renown, lives at No. 17 in Church Row ; and in the two hundred years which have passed since the ultra-Conservative Dean Sherlock inhabited a neighbouring house, we have a fair example of the expansion of thought which had taken place in this long stride of time.

THE CHURCHYARD.—Looking down Church Row, from the Heath Street end of it, the pedestrian has a picturesque sight of the church, which, behind the few lime-trees, propped up and still standing in the middle of the road, forms a harmonious background with its ivy-clad nave, the square tower and green copper spire standing high in the midst.

At the entrance to the churchyard stands a characteristic little cedar-tree, which bears in its person all the marks of antiquity. This dignitary certainly would say that the houses on the north side of the Row were put there in the reign of James II., and those on the south side in the time of Queen Anne. With an official air of authority he has kept his post at the gateway, through generations of change, and has witnessed the passing by of villagers to baptisms, bridals and burials, not only at St. John's Church, but during much, even, of St. Mary's parish existence. Further inside the gates, and on the south side of the church, grows a great ancient yew, so strong that hardly a breeze stirs its branches ; motionless it stands with the secrets of men's lives and the mystery

of their deaths ; so silent, indeed, are all the dark evergreens, that they might be sharing in the sleep of the departed, whose memorial stones they overshadow.

LUCY AIKIN.—When we have turned immediately to the left on entering by the main gate, we come to a chestnut tree, the furthest spread of whose branches reaches towards a red granite gravestone bearing the name of “ Lucy Aikin. Born at Warrington 1781 : died at Hampstead 1884.” This last resting place of their maiden aunt is shared by the le Breton family, with whom she resided. We find recorded on the same granite, “ Philip le Breton, born in Jersey 1806 : died at Hampstead 1884.” Mr. Philip le Breton published “ Memoirs, Miscellanies and Letters ” of Lucy Aikin in 1884, after her death ; he was an excellent resident of Hampstead and took an active part with others in the reclaiming of the Heath.

BAILLIE.—The headstone of Lucy Aikin’s grave nearly touches a tall rusty railing, which surrounds the altar-tomb of the Baillie family. Mrs. Dorothea Baillie, widow of the Rev. Dr. James Baillie, Professor of Divinity at Glasgow University, was buried here in 1806, after four years of residence in Hampstead. Her daughters laid her here, and in the same year removed from the house in which she had lived to Bolton House, Windmill Hill, where they resided for half a century before joining her in the churchyard. In 1851 Miss Agnes buried her sister Joanna, who had been born in 1762 ; and the former, after passing her hundredth year of life, was buried here herself ;

for, having been born in 1760, Agnes died in 1861. A memorial tablet to Mrs. and the Misses Baillie is to be found on the north wall of the interior of the church, near to that of the Rev. Thomas Ainger, vicar.

CONSTABLE.—Following the path to the bottom of the hill, and turning slightly to the right hand, we find another high tomb, surrounded by rails, where John Constable laid his wife, nine years previous to being brought here himself in 1837. This vault lies under the trees and close to the shelter of the high south boundary wall, a bower-shaded spot for the landscape painter, where the trees feel a conscious content in laying their autumn leaves as a cover over him who “loved every stump in the village,” and who “as long as he could hold a brush would never cease to paint them.”

ELIZABETH RUNDLE CHARLES.—Continuing the same path to its termination, and still on the Constable side of it, we shall find the grave of an authoress whose name is universally identified with two of her works, viz., “The Schönberg-Cotta Family” and “Kitty Trevelyan’s Diary,” but whose writings were numerous and profound on subjects of ecclesiastical history and broad religious truth. Mrs. Rundle Charles lived at Coombe Edge, Branch Hill, at the summit of Froginal, and died there in 1896. She was born in 1827, and, during her long life, published fifty books, among which were “Martyrs and Saints of the first Twelve Centuries,” “Early Christian Missions of Ireland, Scotland and England,” “Ecce Ancilla Domini,”

“Ecce Homo, Ecce Rex,” and “The Great Prayer of Christendom.”

The mere title of this last-named work is suggestive of the large and all-embracing nature of Mrs. Rundle Charles as a religious writer, but it is even more characteristic of her as a woman, for there is seldom to be found a feminine mind so wide, so just and so fair, while at the same time retaining its personal enthusiasm. Her public-spiritedness extended to the affairs of all nations, as may be seen in her “Seven Homes,” published in the same year as, but subsequent to, her death.

KEATS.—After walking round the churchyard in search of the names and dates of other Hampstead residents, we may go into the church and find one of these in John Keats (1795–1821) who, during the last three years of his life, lived in Well Walk and in John Street, which is now named Keats’ Grove. That a bust of this poet should occupy a place in the interior of the building was considered by Canon Ainger an incongruity, and he remarked: “Keats could not, indeed, be said so much as to have forgotten what the inside of a church was like as never to have made the discovery.” But as no memorial, intermural or otherwise, had yet been erected on English soil when a hundred years had passed since this exquisite singer was born in London, we find: “This monument to the ever-living memory of John Keats is erected by Americans” in July, 1895, when British and Transatlantic literati met to unveil it. First gathering at Sir Walter Besant’s house, Frognal End, the company

proceeded to the church for the ceremony. Among those present were Algernon Swinburne, William Morris, Alfred Austin, Henry Irving, Miss Ellen Terry and, invited to represent literature in Hampstead, the Rev. Dr. Horton.

The burial ground surrounding the church was used for five centuries—probably longer—and the earliest preserved date in connection with it is 1423, relating to John Burton, whose will is still to be found in Somerset House. This will mentions “the churchyard of the chapel of Hamstede”; the will of Richard Kempe, which is also extant, directs in 1441 that he shall be buried “in the churchyard of the Parish of the Blessed Mary of Hamstede.”

The ground was reconsecrated in 1747, presumably because it was felt to have been desecrated by the demolition of the old church in 1745, during which process, together with the building of the new one, this historic piece of land was no doubt treated very much as a rubbish heap.

DU MAURIER.—If we leave the old churchyard by the chief gate and cross over to the additional burial ground, consecrated in 1812, we may notice from the road a dark brown wood and copper grave, with a horizontal board and upright Iona crosses. The brass letters on the board say:—

GEORGE BUSSON DU MAURIER.

Born in Paris, 1834: died in London 1896.

“A little trust that when we die
We reap our sowing, and so—Good-bye!”

At this graveside the service was read by the Rev. Alfred Ainger, at that time Master of the Temple, whose wonderful voice and intonation had once caused his friend du Maurier to say that he would “like the little Canon to read the funeral service over him, because he would do it so beautifully.” For the artist loved and believed in this Christian clergyman, in spite of not believing in any clergyman’s faith.

Seeing that the words placed under the name of du Maurier provoke frequent inquiry, it may be well to remind readers that they are quoted from the closing lines of his novel “Trilby,” and we may add that they are an adaptation of his own from a French *chanson* :—

A little work, a little play
 To keep us going—and so Good-day !
 A little warmth, a little light
 Of Love’s bestowing—and so Good-night !
 A little fun to match the sorrow
 Of each day’s growing—and so Good-morrow !
 A little trust that when we die
 We reap our sowing—and so Goodbye !

So free a translation it is that the lines may hardly be called more than a suggestion of the original :—

La vie est vaine—
 Un peu d’amour, un peu de haine
 Et puis . . . bonjour !
 La vie est brève—un peu d’espoir,
 Un peu de rêve, et puis . . . bonsoir !

NEW COLLEGE.—The foregoing description of the church, Church Row, and churchyard may give some

slight idea of the summit of the Conduit Fields : but, descending from these old buildings southward to the foot of the hill, and again looking east over two hundred acres of the park-lands of Belsize House, no buildings whatever could be seen until New College began to come into existence in the middle of the nineteenth century.

On the western extremity of Belsize Manor, which was cut up after 1845, this college for the training of Congregational ministers was finished and opened in 1851. The building formed a dignified feature in the vernal landscape of that time, standing alone in the fields which are now crowded with a busy mass of houses, shops and traffic, in contrast with the former solitary tavern and toll-gate of the Swiss Cottage. The architecture of the college is early Tudor, and its walls are of Bath stone : two hundred feet in length, its principal side faced towards the green hedges of Finchley New Road, which at that time was just twenty years old. From the site of the college in those days, and from the roof of its tower still, might be easily discerned the course of the Thames, from Windsor Castle and the Vale of Aylesbury to Knockholt and Gravesend, near the river's mouth.

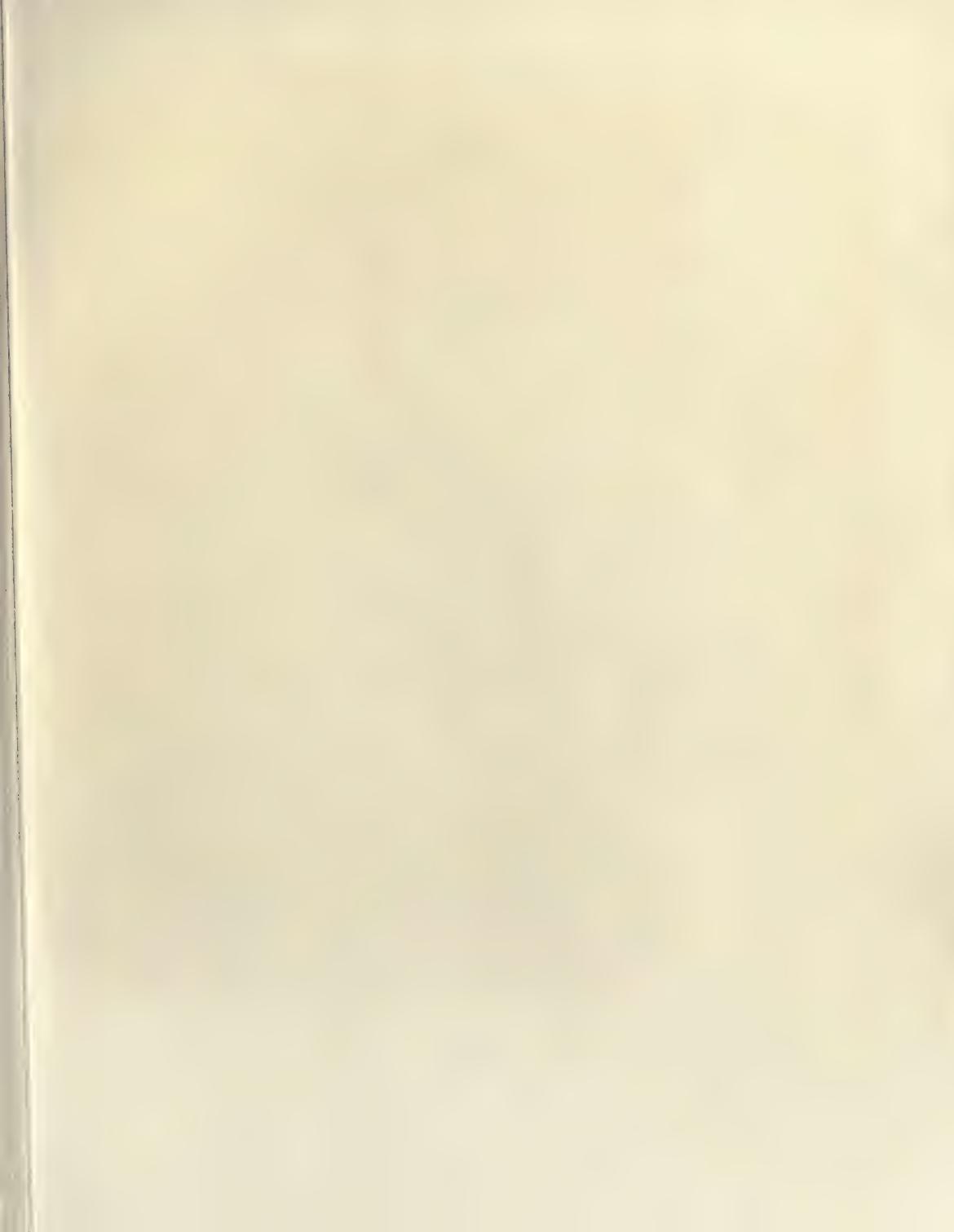
The erection of this large edifice was due to the amalgamation of three smaller colleges existing for the same purpose, and each of them in the neighbourhood of London ; these were Homerton, Coward, and Highbury Colleges, the last of the three having been established in 1783 in Mile End, and removed to Highbury in 1826.

Coward College was founded about the year 1740, and was named after William Coward, who endowed it. Homerton was older than either, and had arisen out of two original foundations, one of which dated from 1730, and the other from a few years after the Revolution of 1688. It is owing to the direct descent from the latter that New College considers itself to be now two hundred and twenty years old.

The south end of the building, as seen from the Swiss Cottage, appears externally to suggest a chapel, but on entering is found to be a very fine library, with stone walls sixty feet long, carved panelling, and a roof of open-framed timber work of hammer-beam construction much like that of Westminster Hall. The stained-glass windows at each end, and those also at the sides, are ornamented with perpendicular tracery, and are placed high above the line of sight, existing only for the purpose of light. The external world being thus satisfactorily excluded, the silent interior induces a reverence in which the voices of the past call to us from the bookshelves which hide the entire walls. These books cover fifteen hundred feet of carved oak shelves, and in harmony with the appearance of these is the stone and carved oak fireplace, high and huge, with wrought-iron dog firegrates; indeed all the fittings of this building of mediæval design are of a like harmony, and must have had a very beautiful effect when they were placed there in the age of the Victorian domestic ugliness in 1851. After ascending a stone staircase, severely innocent of carpet, and having a

stone balustrade and stone arches overhead, we come out upon a cloistered corridor, which extends the length of the building, and are led into the council room, where hang life-sized portraits of all the principals of the institution since the original foundation in the reign of William and Mary. The whole-length oil painting of the professor who gave the address at the opening of New College, the Rev. Dr. Pye Smith, who moreover was a Fellow of the Royal Society, is perhaps the most arresting picture of the collection, with its unusual sensitiveness and refinement of countenance, the wonder, gentleness and reverence of the eyes which, in his case, probably had looked deep into the marvels of science, and never forgotten what they had seen there.

The college possesses a museum with an open roof ; here there are more books and pictures, also glass cases containing not only natural history specimens, but many literary treasures of MSS. and rare editions of books, among which are the journals and Bibles of some notable divines. The most valuable of these Bibles is that of Luther's friend Melancthon, and this is never unlocked except by the principal of the college, who is immensely enthusiastic concerning the institution, which is now incorporated with the University of London, the curriculum being as high as any in Great Britain. More might besaidabout the educational activities, but the foregoing details will serve as an answer to the frequent remark of the Hampstead pedestrian as to nothing being known concerning this college.





JOANNA BAILLIE

CHAPTER VI

JOANNA BAILLIE
THE OLD POOR HOUSE
FENTON HOUSE
NEW GROVE HOUSE AND GEORGE
DU MAURIER

THE GROVE AND SIR GILBERT
SCOTT
2, LOWER TERRACE, AND JOHN
CONSTABLE

REMOUNTING the hill by the road of Old Frogнал, we wind our way round to the front of Mount Vernon Hospital, and find ourselves facing Windmill Hill. Here, on the west side, are four tall narrow houses, attached to each other, standing far back behind their own gardens, in which grow very tall trees, so that if it be summer time and leafy, we must look before the red medallion becomes visible on Bolton House.

Arriving from Bothwell, in Lanarkshire, in 1802, Joanna Baillie, with her mother and sister Agnes, took up their permanent abode in Hampstead, while Dr. Matthew Baillie, their brother, carried on his medical practice in London. It was in 1806, immediately after their mother's death, that the sisters moved to Windmill Hill.

The manner in which her house stands back, partially hidden from the public observer, is quite suggestive of the authoress's retired nature and the shyness which veiled her power, for Joanna's character was strong and gentle, showing the combination of a noble mind with the quietness of her womanly nature, and a tenderness of soul which has been described as "pure

to its inmost recesses." As long as her old and blind mother continued to need her care, the daughter had remained strictly anonymous, and would not lend herself to the social popularity which was ready to descend upon her from the highest quarters. In the drawing-rooms of her literary friends the poetess remained perfectly silent while the company discussed her works, curious concerning their authorship, ascribing them first to one writer then to another, but invariably ascribing them to a man, while there sat the writer of "*Basil*" and of "*De Montfort*," unmoved in her characteristic modesty and the strength of her Scotch reserve.¹ But in the years following Mrs. Baillie's death—the assiduous filial care being now no longer needed—Bolton House became the scene of much interesting society, and here the genial hostesses received many distinguished guests. Wordsworth walked to Windmill Hill across the fields from London, "those fields behind Oxford Street," and strolled on the Heath with the "ablest authoress of the day," whom he quickly came to regard as his ideal friend. "If I had to present to a foreigner anyone as a model of an English gentlewoman," he writes, "it would be Joanna Baillie."

Sir Walter Scott, on being asked whether he considered Burns or Campbell Scotland's finest poet, replied: "If you wish to speak of a real poet, Joanna Baillie, of Bothwell, is now the greatest genius of our country." And Scott, who had hitherto known her only by her

¹ "*De Montfort*," produced in 1800, was acted by the Kembles at Drury Lane.

works, now sought an introduction to the poetess ; this was made by a third poet, Sotheby. " That day at Hampstead in 1806 was one of the most remarkable in my life," she writes. And the happy affinity between Sir Walter Scott and herself which sprang into being at that time, when she must have been forty-four years of age, developed a continuous exchange of high thought and friendly affection which ended only with death. On May 9, 1808, he writes to her : " I wish we could have the pleasure to see Miss Agnes and you at our little farm which is now in its glory." In 1810 he wrote a prologue to the play which she produced in that year, under the name of " The Family Legends," which was acted in Edinburgh, the chief part being taken by Mrs. Siddons. Mrs. le Breton writes in her " Memories of Seventy Years " : " Mrs. Joanna told us, in her quiet, droll way, that some of her old friends in Scotland were shocked at the line of writing she had taken to, and said to one another, ' Have ye heard that Jocky Baillie has taken to the public line ? ' " Visits on the part of Scott and Joanna Baillie were exchanged with as much frequency as was convenient in those days of long coach journeys. In his letters, Sir Walter Scott always " begs his kind respects to dear Miss Agnes." In his diary for April 18, 1818, he records : " Breakfasted at Hampstead with Joanna Baillie and found that gifted person extremely well."¹

¹ The Misses Hill, of Hampstead, nieces of Sir Rowland Hill, K.C.B., have lately taken infinite pains to verify the statements that Sir Walter Scott and Wordsworth visited at Bolton House, and the result of their research has brought them full satisfaction on this point.

Charles James Fox, during his Liberal leadership, found time to write five pages in commendation of her plays. Concerning her serious dramas, Lord Bryon said : " Joanna Baillie is the only woman who can write a tragedy." Truly the terrible events connected with the French Revolution, and the agitated condition of other European countries at that time, had deeply impressed the poetess's grave and sensitive mind, and she gave herself up to this strain in a series of works called, " Plays on the Passions." Mrs. le Breton says :—

Soon after the publication of the last volume the friends of Mrs. Joanna got up a reading of one of them at the Holly Bush Assembly Rooms, [then the only public rooms in Hampstead]. Mrs. Bartley [she continues], who had been on the stage, was asked to read. She performed her task with much effect and feeling. The large room was quite full. The two dear old ladies, dressed alike in grey silk, with pretty lace caps, came in quietly with the rest, Mrs. Joanna walking meekly behind her elder sister. Her friends understood her feelings too well to distress her by any public recognition of her presence, though she accepted their congratulations at the end with evident pleasure and simple dignity.

A new edition of these plays was published in 1821 by Messrs. Longman, and it is interesting to remember that Mr. Longman was a Hampstead resident, living for many years in a large house which stood at the top of a grassy bank surmounted by elms, where the Wesleyan Church now stands in the High Street.

Among her bright songs and ballads, Miss Baillie is best remembered in these days by " The Chough and Crow to roost have gone," which was immortalised by

Sir Henry Bishop's melody. Concerning Agnes and Joanna Baillie, gentlewomen of culture, of intellect and of quaint charm, it was but recently related, by a very old lady in the village, how the sisters still paid morning calls when verging on ninety years of age, when they discussed with vigorous interest all the literary and public topics of the day. "This gifted person" whom Sir Walter Scott reported to have been "extremely well" appears to have remained so for many years; the immortal Joanna, as he calls her in his introduction to "Marmion," suffered but one day's illness at the age of eighty-nine, and passed away. Her sister Agnes outlived her by eleven years, and died at the age of a hundred and one; they were buried by the Rev. Thomas Ainger in their mother's grave in the parish churchyard. During thirty-four years of the Misses Baillie's attendance at the church, they had enjoyed the ministry of the Rev. Dr. White, who had been a friend of their family in his youth, and happily became vicar of Hampstead five years after they settled here.

The first half of the nineteenth century, which had been spent by Joanna in this neighbourhood, may perhaps be considered the most interesting period in its history, when we remember the guests at Bolton House; those also who came to visit at Leigh Hunt's cottage in the Vale of Health, when Byron lived next door to him, and Shelley was lodging in Pond Street, Coleridge driving over from Highgate, or walking hither by the shorter footpath of Millfield Lane, but

in any case pouring forth his metaphysics into the ear of some victim—Charles Lamb or John Keats, at this time lodging successively in Well Walk and at Lawn Bank. Representing politics and local philanthropy, the Hon. Spencer Perceval, another old friend of Dr. White's, was residing at Belsize Manor, and active in good works in the Hampstead parish. Concerning art, Constable lived and painted here for the last ten years of his life during this period, opening the eyes of others to follow where his much admired village consisted of a steep and long High Street, with red-tiled roofs, low-ceilinged shops with large gardens behind them, sandy-floored taverns with coachyards, curious passages and step-ways in unexpected places, outlying houses in large grounds ; and finally at the summit of Heath Street the great expanse of sandy hills and furze-bush, fir-trees and ferns, distant views of town and far country—this wide plain loved by painters and writers, by horse-racers, preachers, election pollers and donkey drivers, by all sorts and conditions of men.

THE OLD POOR HOUSE.—The historic white house, the situation of which has hitherto remained nebulous in the published accounts of Hampstead, previously stood on the ground which is now covered by the west wing of the Mount Vernon Consumption Hospital—so we are assured by an aged lady with an excellent memory. In the eighteenth century that double-gabled dwelling, which dated from Elizabethan days, was used as a lodging house from 1720 or 1725, and onward, by visitors to the chalybeate Wells ; Colley



THE POOR HOUSE, MOUNT VERNON, IN 1801

Engraving by George French



Cibber, with David Garrick and other dramatic friends, made it his summer quarters. From here they would look down upon the thickly wooded slopes of Froginal, and breathe the pure, bracing air which, at that time, blew, almost without intervention, from the Surrey hills and from parts of the Middlesex range. Later in the same century, the house was rented by the guardians of the poor, and served the purpose of the village workhouse, for, in the reign of George I., an Act of Parliament for the housing of the poor allowed that "the churchwardens and overseers of the poor in any parish might, with the accord of the majority of residents, hire or rent any house which they thought suitable for their purpose." The peculiar suitability of this abode for the purpose of the poor appears to have presented itself to the minds of eighteenth century benevolence, in the fact of its being too unhealthy for the rich. (This old house, after standing for a few years as an interesting ruin, was taken down about the year 1807.)

In the year 1800, however, another Act was passed under George III., in which we read concerning the poor of Hampstead: "The present workhouse is not large enough to contain its numerous inmates, and is become so decayed and incommodious as to render their continuance therein dangerous and inconvenient." Hence a better provision was made; and among the guardians and trustees at this time appointed were many of the notables of the neighbourhood, viz., Lord Mansfield, of Kenwood (Caen Wood) Place; the

Hon. Thomas Erskine, of Evergreen Hill, now named Erskine House; Samuel Hoare, Esq., the Lombard Street banker, living at Heath House, near "Jack Straw's Castle"; Thomas Neave, Esq., afterwards Baronet, of Vane House; Lord Loughborough, of Rosslyn House; the Earl of Chesterfield, Shelford Lodge, and the Hon. Spencer Perceval, of Belsize Manor.

In the year 1845 a site was chosen at New End, between Heath Street and Flask Walk, for a new workhouse, to which was added in 1870 an infirmary ward, with novel hygienic inventions, designed by Charles Bell, F.R.I.B.A.

FENTON HOUSE.—Standing with one's back to the hospital, while the Constitutional Club is on the right, it is well to walk straight forward into the Grove. Here a large garden behind a very high wall surrounds Fenton House, which, with its high-pitched red tiled roof, is considered the finest of the Queen Anne houses in Hampstead; following the garden wall towards the north and the west, we shall from that situation, obtain a much more extensive view of the solid old mansion. The house derived its present name from one of its owners, Philip Fenton, an eminent Riga merchant. It was originally known as Ostend House, and afterwards as the Clock House. The remains of a large dial plate are still discernible over the front door. At that end of the garden which borders on Enfield House, and which faces into Windmill Hill, are some wrought iron gates of ornate design and delicate workmanship. Mr. Trewby, who was still living in

Fenton House in 1909, made much research concerning the origin of the gates, but was only able to surmise that they might have been brought here from old St. Paul's Cathedral, or that they were introduced by a French family, during whose occupation of the house the Abbé Morel, before building his chapel, used Fenton House in which to say public Mass. Mr. H. P. Fenton, a retired diplomatist, who died past the age of ninety at The Hague, remembered that in his grandfather's time these ornamental gates were reported to have been brought from the Duke of Chandos's famous seat, Canons Park, near Edgware, which was pulled down in 1847. A few old residents remember this entrance being used for sedan chairs going to and from the parish church, but it is purely a thing of ornament now, for—doubtless in order to protect the historic treasure—plain iron railings and thick bushes have been placed between it and the public footway, in consequence of which the pedestrian must look very carefully lest these obscure his view, and this interesting feature should escape him.

The names of the various owners of Fenton House can be traced in the Manor Rolls as far back only as 1707, though there are indications that the building was erected in the previous century. In 1765 the name of the tenant was John Hyndman, and there is some record of the existence of a brew-house, a portion of which is traced in the present stables ; in 1793 Philip Fenton owned the house ; in 1807 it became the property of his son James, a member of whose family convened a

meeting of copyholders in 1829, at the neighbouring "Holly Bush" Inn, to make one of the numerous protests against the offence of the Lord of the Manor in building on the Heath. The house was next bequeathed by the will of James Fenton to Edward Oates. Later, it belonged to the family of the Selwyns, and also to Mrs. David Murray, the great-aunt of Lord Mansfield, who became in her own right Baroness Gray. After the occupation of Mr. Whitelaw, the freehold was purchased by Mr. Trewby, who acted for many years as consulting engineer to the late Sultan of Turkey. Mr. Trewby, who appreciated the antiquity of this most restful and charming old mansion, took pains for more than twenty-five years, to preserve it in good condition, and left his widow to reside in it still. In the well-matured garden stands a mulberry tree, older than the building itself and bent under the burden of fully three centuries ; there is also a Judas tree of evil legend growing on the lawn. Indoors, the fine staircase leads up to the drawing-room and billiard-room, and among other places of interest are the little powder-closets of the wig days.

NEW GROVE HOUSE. GEORGE DU MAURIER.—On the side of the road opposite to that which is bordered by the high garden wall of Fenton House, we easily see Old Grove House, and, attached to it, towering above it almost to extinction, is New Grove House, the late dwelling of our distinguished *Punch* artist and novelist, who occupied this residence from 1874 to 1895, and, in his person and in the scenery of his pictures, was

associated with this neighbourhood for more than thirty years. Though the ivy is doing its best to conceal George du Maurier's name on the red tablet by the door, nothing can veil the memory of him, as he walked daily down the avenue of old trees in the Grove with his great St. Bernard dog, who made such a conspicuous figure in his master's drawings. Coming to live in Hampstead in 1862, we can recognise through the rest of his days the effect of the Heath and other local scenery upon the landscape portion of this artist's pictures. From the Whitestone Pond, with donkeys galloping round, we get the suggestion for his "Pons-asinorum"; from the North London Station, Finchley Road, when broad fields still surrounded it, he conceived the picture of the lady and ragged child whom she had brought thither from a city slum and who exclaimed, "Lor! Miss, what a big sky they've got in these parts!" It was on the Sandy Road—that romantic part of the West Heath between The Firs and North End—that the young æsthete remarked he had never yet seen a sunset that came up to his ideal. "At least," he added, "in Nature." Among other drawings were those of the tobogganning down the hill in front of Judge's Walk; and the skating on the Highgate Ponds with the quotation from Gray's Alcaics: "Felix! in imo qui scatentem," etc.

His neighbour, Canon Ainger, himself of French descent, delighted in du Maurier's wit and in all his graceful fun; he speaks of him as the most generous and genial host, "the tenderest of husbands and

fathers," and he addresses him in words of intimate affection in his many letters, one of which begins : " Dear and honoured Poet, Artist, Humorist and MAN." " For fifteen years du Maurier was the constant companion of my walks upon the Heath," he said. Dating from early in the eighties, they met always once, and often twice a day, at each other's house or out of doors ; indeed it was interesting to Hampstead residents merely to pass them together in the road—the white scholarly cleric and the darker, more terrestrial family-man, square and comfortable, albeit every inch an artist. " No one can have had better opportunity of testing the unfailing charm of his conversation," said Alfred Ainger, " the width of his reading and observation, and his inexhaustible fund of anecdote." Indeed, concerning his gift as raconteur, it seems somewhat due to the recalling and recounting of the things of his youthful days that du Maurier afterwards produced so much autobiographical matter when he began, after he was fifty years of age, to write those most original novels which fairly burst upon an appreciative public. To his old friends, however, the existence of the power which produced these works was not a surprise ; he had been, both in prose and verse, a frequent though an anonymous contributor to *Punch*, upon the literary staff of which Tom Taylor had often proposed to place him—a proposal which du Maurier would no doubt have accepted if he could have borne the strain of the extra work which the position would have brought him. The artist's health,

in spite of the appearance of such high spirits, was never of the best, and we may thank the bracing air of the Heath for the stimulation of his physical strength. It is possible that we owe much of the development of his literary talent to the intimate companionship of the clergyman critic. Certainly Ainger, in his turn, received from du Maurier much enlightenment in artistic matters: on one occasion, after buying a valuable picture, he writes to him: "How thankful I am to you, Kicky, for having taught me among other things, to know good art when I see it, though that knowledge is going far to land me in the bankruptcy court." The temporary failure of du Maurier's eyesight which, while depriving him of the power of drawing, forced him to take up lecturing, was another influence in his tendency to literature: and after the return of his sight, this resulted in the writing of his wonderful works of fiction.

Concerning the autobiographical suggestions for these stories, the memory of his school days at Passy is used with graphic effect in the scene-painting of his third novel, "The Martian," for here his own experiences are embodied in the early years of Barty Jocelyn's career. The mental sufferings due to du Maurier's threatened eyesight, which first attacked him as a young man of twenty-three, are represented in this hero's affliction of blindness. In Barty's handsome and capable wife and in his charming children, we have a strong reflection of the gifted household in the Grove at Hampstead. The Bohemian life of art-students,

so vividly remembered from his own young days in the Quartier Latin, furnished the novelist with those unique and attractive scenes in "Trilby," his second story. No one gloried more in this new success of du Maurier's than the literary critic who was his intimate friend. In 1890 after the publication of "Peter Ibbetson," his first novel, Ainger commences a letter to its author, "My own dear Artist and Novelist of the future." In 1891 we find a letter beginning, "Dear Novelist of the Season"; in 1894, "I have read the first three numbers of *Harper* with astonishment and delight." Concerning the united efforts of the three Englishmen to convince Trilby of a higher standard of womanhood the critic continues:—

You have reached a height that any novelist might envy; it is almost genius. And moreover, dear boy, allow me to say that you there excelled yourself because you forgot in the intensity of your own feeling to be consciously witty or humorous. All through you are, save in one or two passages, in my judgment too perpetually upon the humorous tiptoe, you are nowhere so excellent as when you forget the persiflage element and become serious. . . . The first half of your book is charming and true to nature, but afterwards deprived of its dignity by the supernatural.

Respecting the dramatic representation of this novel, a performance of which Ainger attended, he wrote to du Maurier:—

MASTER'S HOUSE, TEMPLE,

December 4th, 1895.

MY DEAR KICKY,—I really did enjoy myself last night; of course the play was a ridiculous parody on the novel, but it reminded me at every turn of the dear characters and the dear pictures.

Ainger tells us of the facility with which these stories were written, describing how the author stood artist-like with the MS. up against the back of the piano—that piano at which he would sit to play and sing his French ditties with so much personal charm, in the studio which was the centre of social interest among the large family at New Grove House. It was with this felicity of execution and accuracy to real life that the novelist represented the dramatic situation of little Billee's mother arriving in Paris to break off his engagement with Trilby, when the Laird fled, and Taffy was left alone to encounter the visitor, and endure the awful cross-examination. This scene may be given as an instance of the author's rapidity and genius, for it was written one evening between dinner and bed-time.

It was in the year 1896, in the last August of du Maurier's life, when his health and sight were fast failing, but his spirits remained buoyant and his sense of humour undiminished, that he with his wife and children spent their holidays, as so frequently, at Whitby, Canon Ainger being with them. Taking one of their long afternoon walks when Ainger would say, “ Do let us have tea at a country inn, at ‘ The Cat and Snuffers ’ or the ‘ Cow and Toothbrush,’ ” they saw to their joy and amusement some sweets advertised for sale in a village shop as “ Trilby drops.” One of the daughters of the author of “ Trilby ” went in and inquired about this new form of confectionery. “ Such is fame,” her father exclaimed, for the shopkeeper had not an idea what the word meant.

Early in October of the same year du Maurier became ill, and died on the eighth of that month, at his house in town. This event took place on a Wednesday evening, while the historic *Punch* dinner was going on at its usual time and place without him. There the news was made known to those with whom he had been associated for thirty-six years. Du Maurier was sixty-two years of age at this time. Having been born in Paris in 1834, he was brought to London when he was three or four years old, returned to France for his school education, but came again to London, taking a course of science at University College, after which he became an excellent analytical chemist. Developing, however, his gift of drawing with such conspicuous power, he returned again to Paris in 1856, to study art in the Quartier Latin. After his first contribution to *Punch* was accepted in 1860, he remained resident in England, where his father had lived as a naturalised British subject, and his grandfather had taken refuge at the time of the French Revolution. In 1862, George du Maurier came to settle in Hampstead; in 1865 he took Leech's place on *Punch*; in 1869, among other things, he illustrated Thackeray's "Esmond," and in 1881 was elected a member of the Society of Painters in Water-colour. The first exhibition of his drawings took place at the Fine Art Society in 1885. After this came the period of semi-blindness, when, as we have already seen du Maurier took up lecturing, at which he was successful in all parts of England, and in Scotland. By the year 1890, he was writing his novels, to which

was added the production of those marvellous illustrations which accompanied them. At the same time he was contributing his weekly picture to *Punch*, also finding the subjects and composing the dialogue in connection with them. And it is not surprising that, to a constitution never robust, and a temperament at all points sensitive and delicate, this life with its double work proved too great a strain.

THE GROVE.—The windows at the back of New Grove House and of Old Grove House look out upon Golden Square, a remnant of the old town perched on the side of the hill and communicating with Heath Street by means of a narrow roadway called Silver Street. We can approach this heterogeneous collection of little old houses, cottages, passages and step-ways which exists in the vicinity of Golden Square by turning sharp round the corner of du Maurier's house, where we find ourselves surrounded by the remnants of a by-gone day, and in that part of Hampstead which was the most thickly populated portion of the old village.

Leaving Golden Square by the same way which led us there, we must now follow the north wall of Fenton House garden, walking under those very old trees which formed the original grove. Here we stand to look at the high white house of irregular shape, at the top of which an iron railing runs round the flat roof. Tradition says that a retired admiral who built the house a hundred years ago paced up and down this fine elevation in the imaginary command of a ship below. The view which he must have had from this height in the early

nineteenth century extended a huge distance round a sweep of open country, embracing portions of several counties, so that his horizon would be as unlimited as that of his broad ocean and the air which he breathed from his house-top must have been almost as pure.

SIR GILBERT SCOTT.—After the Admiral's occupation of the white house, Sir Gilbert, at that time Mr., Scott, took possession of it; but it was only at the end of the year 1910 that this fact was memorialised by a mural tablet which gives the dates of his birth and death, namely 1811-1878. It might, however, be of interest to the reader to learn that the period during which this house was his home dated from 1856 to 1865, for he left Hampstead thirteen years before his decease. On a clear day we are able to see from Parliament Hill, Sir Gilbert Scott's noble design, as expressed in the structure of the Midland Hotel at St. Pancras, though his Albert Memorial at Kensington, his Foreign Office, Home and Colonial Offices, would lie too far out of sight. This great architect was brought up in his father's vicarage in Buckinghamshire, and it seems possible that as a boy he may have inherited impressions of ecclesiastical design both from him and from his grandfather the Rev. Thomas Scott, the eminent Biblical commentator. With so much Church association it is perhaps not surprising that Gilbert's mind should have become possessed by the spirit of Gothic architecture, of which he was destined to become the great modern reviver. His hand is to

be traced in a dozen renovations of English cathedrals, including the entire re-building, by Lord Grimthorpe's munificence, of St. Albans Abbey; and Peterborough, Gloucester, Exeter, Chester, Canterbury Cathedrals and even Westminster Abbey were among the subjects of his restoration designs.

HENRY SHARPE.—Another resident of the Grove House, a merchant in Fenchurch Street, and a gentleman long known and respected in Hampstead, was Mr. Henry Sharpe, who died in this house in April, 1873, leaving his widow and sons and daughters to reside there. This philanthropic educationalist employed all his leisure from business—he was at the head of a firm trading with Portugal—in improving the minds of young shopmen and working-men. As early as 1840, when living in Heath Street, his little sitting-room there would be filled every evening with these pupils. In the church is a memorial tablet placed there by sixty youths in acknowledgment of the instruction and mental cultivation which they had received from him, together with his brothers Daniel and Samuel, also from Mr. Edwin Field, of Squire's Mount, his brother-in-law, who assisted this beneficent work by giving drawing classes. Mr. Sharpe rendered much practical and financial help to the Subscription Library at Stanfield House: he resisted strongly all building encroachments on the Heath, and did much public good in a quiet manner, disliking notoriety. His widow continued to live at the Grove until her death, about twenty years after that of her husband.

GROVE LODGE.—Attached to Grove House on the west side is a low and much older building, named Grove Lodge, which must have stood alone at one time in this immediate neighbourhood. Miss Constance Hill tells us that it was formerly a farmhouse, and adds :—

It is a curious rambling building, full of narrow passages and unexpected steps leading to small rooms stowed away in odd corners, and it possesses several secret cupboards and strange recesses hidden behind panelling. There is a room at the top of the house, where, long ago, priests' vestments were discovered. Mrs. Swan, a former owner of the house, remembered her grandmother telling her how, when a child, she played at games in that upper chamber, arraying herself in these mysterious adornments. The room, which remains unchanged, must have presented a quaint background to such a scene, with its great beams supporting the low ceilings and its dormer windows on either side.

The raised path which carries us round from Grove Lodge to the front of Terrace Lodge—a picturesque cottage beyond—was a characteristic footway of old Hampstead, being on a higher level by many feet than the road below, and until recently was bordered with those white posts upholding a chain, used so much in the old village. Examples of the raised path occur in Belsize Avenue, Foley Avenue, Well Walk, and many other spots, including Heath Street, which formed the background in a subject-picture by Ford Madox Brown, under the title of “Work,” where the scene is placed in Hampstead about 1850—this picture is now in the Manchester Art Gallery. These high side-paths naturally become less conspicuous as

time goes on, for the constant mending of the roads below tend to equalise the level of the two.

NETLEY COTTAGE.—At the back of Grove Lodge, and nestling, red-roofed, beside the tall white house, stands Netley Cottage, once the residence of Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, also frequented by Robert Louis Stevenson, Sir Sidney Colvin, and other men of letters.

CONSTABLE'S LANDSCAPE.—The white house with roof-railings formed the subject of a landscape by John Constable: this painting hangs in the National Gallery.¹ In the year 1821 the artist was spending the summer at Lower Terrace, at the westerly end of the Grove, and a few yards from his gates this scene would present itself, namely, The Grove Lodge, attached to the high west wall of the Admiral's house, which towers above it, while still further to the west is Terrace Lodge, which stands there to-day partly covered with ivy, perched up on the bank with its cosy bay windows looking down on the road far below. The only unrecognisable feature in the picture is the pond which occupies the middle foreground; it has now vanished, giving its site to a modern red brick house, the water of the pond having been drained off, and the bed of it filled up, to make a garden for this residence called Rickford Lodge. The fine old trees which we see on the right hand of Constable's landscape still border the side of Rickford Lodge garden, though it is obvious that their large branches must have been cut off, and that the smaller ones, subsequently put forth

¹ See Frontispiece.

by the aged trunks, are of a more recent date. Constable's horse which is stooping to drink in the pond, with its rustic rider astride, is a pleasant object and peaceful enough, but before this water was abolished, half a century ago, it had become the last resting-place of defunct dogs and cats, and the sanitary principles of even that period demanded that poetry should make way for public hygiene. Thus Crocketts Pond disappeared! Its name was a word corruption of Clock House Pond, which it will be remembered was the former name of Fenton House, the garden wall of which rose up beside the pool. We must take one minute's walk down the road beside that old garden wall which towers over us on our left, for here the back of Joanna Baillie's house looks towards us, and the end of her long narrow garden touches the road in which we are walking. Trying to discover where Constable could have stationed himself to obtain exactly that view for his landscape, and allowing for the absence—seventy years before it was built—of Rickford Lodge, we shall decide that it must have been just this spot outside the end of Joanna Baillie's garden.

JOHN CONSTABLE, R.A.—In this corner of Hampstead were housed, not only a black-and-white artist of the very first rank, and a great architect, but also England's foremost landscape-painter and reformer. No. 2, Lower Terrace, opposite Terrace Lodge, is the little house in which Constable, with his wife and young children, spent the summer months of 1821, and a few following years. In 1827 they were lodging

for the season in Well Walk, and after this time—when Mrs. John Constable inherited twenty thousand pounds from her father, who had been solicitor to the Admiralty—the artist was able to rent a country house of his own near the Heath, while still retaining his London residence. In the early nineteenth century it was the custom of Londoners to regard Hampstead as a health and pleasure resort, desirable almost exclusively during the summer season ; and we may suppose that the stage-coach from St. Giles's must have been as clamorously demanded as are the present seats in the trains for the seaside in the month of August.

The permanent house in Well Walk which Constable retained until his death was in his time called No. 6, but was afterwards pulled down, rebuilt and called No. 44. For this reason therefore No. 2, Lower Terrace, is a truer structural record ; here the garden-shed long retained traces of its use as an outdoor studio ; indeed, an old resident tells us she had often played here as a child and heard about the great painter who had inhabited it. It was from this little house that Constable wrote, when his children were all young around him and his characteristic simplicity made him delight in the smallest things of natural life :—

There is a prodigious bustle with the fowls, the black hen making a great to-do, the cock strutting about, and Billy the cat looking at them in great astonishment from the back kitchen window. A dear little robin is washing himself in the pigeon's dish ; dipping himself all over and making such a shaking and bobbing and bustle that it is really ridiculous.

From Well Walk he writes to his friend Dean Fisher : “ Our little room commands a view unsurpassed in Europe, from Westminster Abbey to Gravesend. The dome of St. Paul’s in the air seems to realise Michael Angelo’s words on seeing the Pantheon, ‘ I will build such a thing in the sky ! ’ ” It was, indeed, such a representation which Constable made of the distant city and cathedral in the picture which he painted of Steele’s house, Haverstock Hill, and which he exhibited in 1832. To Charles Leslie, R.A., his artist-friend and biographer, he writes from Well Walk in 1831 : “ Will this weather tempt you to walk over the fields to my pretty dwelling ? ” And Leslie walks over the fields, not only to the pretty dwelling, but to hear the landscape-painter lecture on art at a meeting of the Literary and Scientific Institute on Holly Hill. On his way hither it is recorded how he stood long on the West Heath enthralled by the view of the sunset ; for, though Leslie’s subjects in art were of so different a nature from those of his friend, he had had his eyes opened to behold wondrous things, and nothing was more dear to him now than the Constable clouds.

From his first coming to live in London in 1795, John Constable frequently found his way to the quiet picturesque village and its surrounding country to spend a long day alone with Nature ; and we may feel that, during this period of his temporary and unfruitful study of the Old Masters, it was Hampstead which kept alive in him his personal call to landscape art. The Heath, at that date infinitely more rural than we

are able to imagine from its present cultivated condition, abounded in wild flowers and in quiet wooded copses ; previous to the levelling of the sand-hills it possessed also many hidden valleys and sequestered places. This condition of things supplied all that joy which had irresistibly drawn him to art at the time when he had been trying to devote himself to the work of his father's mill at East Bergholt, in Suffolk, where, as he himself said, the country had cried out to him to paint it. Might it not be true, as the Welsh artist Richard Wilson once said of him, that this man " was one of those appointed to show to the world the hidden stores and beauties of Nature " ? Constable himself once remarked : " No one who is arrogant was ever permitted to see Nature in all her beauty." Certainly this man never dimmed his spiritual eyesight with worldly ambition nor dulled his hearing with the heaviness of pomp ; he was willing, rather, in his reverence and humility to be still, and let the spirit of creation speak, that he might record her utterance. Thus looking with a pure soul on the loveliness of earth and sky as it existed, by his honesty he revolutionised art in favour of what became known as the school of faithful landscape. Doubtless his sincerity had received a shock when, coming from his home in Suffolk, he first encountered the accepted methods in London, where landscapes were composed after the fancy of the painter or to suit the false conceptions of the time ; moreover they were executed inside studios instead of in the open air. God's beautiful earth was insulted

in the name of art ; the affectation of Arcadian simplicity, the Dresden-china shepherdesses of country life—all were to him a glaring lie told to please the vulgar and elaborate society of that Georgian day. The public, trained to admire artificial, semi-classical adaptations, smiled at the foolish fidelity of Constable's country scenes, complaining that they bore too striking a resemblance to the originals, while critics indignantly inquired : "What is to become of conventional landscape-painting if such pictures as these are to be accepted ?" This artist's rain was wet ! "Give me an umbrella," Fuseli cried ; "I'm going to see Constable's pictures." His white clouds seemed to be fleeting so quickly across a blue April sky, they might pass off the canvas ere you could overtake them. No wonder that honest John should grow a little satirical : "My art flatters no one by imitation . . . it has no fal-de-lals nor fiddle-de-dees, how then can I hope to be popular !" And in England, until he was nearly forty years old, he never sold one of his own works, but had to live by copying those of other painters. In Paris, however, in 1821 his "Haywain," also other landscapes at Lille, 1824, were exhibited and immensely admired ; the untrammelled French mind quickly caught at a fresh idea, bought his works, adopted his ideals and set up a new school, filling their next year's exhibitions with Constable imitations. And because this man spoke the truth as he saw it, behold an incredible change !

Our artist married when he was forty, and it was not



HAMPSTEAD HEATH
(Engraved after a painting by Constable)



until he was fifty-two years of age that—his wife then coming into her patrimony—he was enabled to exhibit his own peculiar art even in England, for he could then afford to commit that worst social crime of sincerity. Awakened by the marked appreciation of the French, the Royal Academy in England began slowly to acknowledge his worth. The aged President of that society said to him, “ You must have loved Nature very much to be able to paint like this ! ” He was now made an R.A., but it was not, of course, until after the painter’s death that his greatness became fully recognised. His pictures “ The Windmill,” “ The Valley Farm,” “ The Cornfield,” are supposed to be Hampstead subjects, and they hang in the National Gallery with “ The Haywain ” which was afterwards bought back from the French. A picture in the South Kensington Museum entitled “ The Heath ” was painted on Hampstead Heath, and in that Museum are to be found also his “ Salisbury Cathedral ” and “ Dedham.” Mr. Leslie possessed twenty studies of skies by John Constable, taken at Hampstead ; on the back of the paper of these were recorded the direction of the wind, the time of day and certain climatic details. It was respecting his picture of “ The Avenue of Fir Trees ”—the trees which are familiarly known in Hampstead as the Constable Firs, and which are to be found on the west side of the Heath at the end of the Spaniard’s Road—that the artist-poet William Blake exclaimed, “ This is not painting, it is inspiration ! ” Constable had indeed a peculiar passion for

this neighbourhood, saying, "I came to live in Hampstead that the beauties of Nature might be ever before me. I love every stile and stump and lane in the village, and, as long as I am able to hold a brush, I shall never cease to paint them." In 1833 and 1836 he was lecturing at the Literary and Scientific Institution, which met in the Assembly Rooms at the back of the "Holly Bush" Inn. On the former date he gave a series of discourses on the "Origin of Landscape Painting"; on the latter date the subject of his address was "Trees," on which occasion he whimsically described the ash-tree growing on the Green near the entrance to Hampstead village, as

An elegant young lady who died of a broken heart, for she had suffered the disgrace of a board being hung on her side, driven in by two iron nails, after which she had become paralysed for she never recovered the shock, and afterwards died. The words there expressed being that all "vagrants and beggars would be dealt with according to law."

It is interesting to remember that the Assembly Rooms where these lectures were given were the supposed remains of George Romney's studio, and to recall the brilliant social success which that great portrait-painter had gained, ending, however, in a depression of mind so intense that it cost him his reason. We may well consider whether the fashionable folk of society whom he had made his life-study, and for whom he had forsaken his home, wife and children, had left so happy a result on his life and character as did the strong westerly breeze blown over the brow of

John Constable, as he sharpened his senses to reproduce the effect of it, and the glitter of the rain-shower which it brought. The mind of the landscape-artist seemed, as it were, to be washed in his clean country rain ; his manner and bearing were fresh, his eye penetrating and sincere, it was reported that “ his word was to be relied on to the uttermost,” his actions were beneficent and kindly. And it was owing to the indirect effect of such an action that Constable died ; for having been hard at work one day at his studio in London, he started out late in the evening on an errand of relief connected with the “ Artists’ Benevolent Fund,” and returning home hungry, long after the household had gone to rest, he ate some cold vegetables, the only thing he could find, and died from the consequences the same night. This took place at his house in London in 1837, and he was brought to Hampstead to be buried beside his wife, who, as was mentioned in a former chapter on the churchyard, preceded him to the grave by nine years.

CHAPTER VII

UPPER TERRACE AND CANON
AINGER
JOHN HENRY FOLEY

JUDGES' WALK AND CAPO
DI MONTE
MRS. SARAH SIDDONS

LEAVING Constable's little house, 2, Lower Terrace, and walking uphill towards the left, we arrive at Upper Terrace, No. 2 of which was the first permanent home in Hampstead of the Rev. Alfred Ainger, Canon of Bristol, and Reader—afterwards Master—of the Temple.

London-born and bred, Alfred Ainger, upon leaving University life at Cambridge, first took a curacy near to Lichfield and afterwards became a schoolmaster at Sheffield, where, with his delightful gift for friendship, he made social ties which remained throughout his life. To his penetrating expressive voice and intonation, also to the hidden presence of his dramatic power, we may attribute the fact of his having been chosen, in 1866, out of many competitors for the Readership of the Temple. The orthodox evangelical type of his theology would be in harmony with the traditions of that church where, in that year of 1866, Dr. Robinson still continued his Mastership, being succeeded in 1869 by Dean Vaughan, who became a personal friend of Ainger's until the dean's death.

It was not until Alfred Ainger lived in a school at



CONSTABLE'S HOUSE-DOOR
2, Lower Terrace



JUDGES' WALK AND MRS. SIDDONS' COTTAGE



Carlton Hill, St. John's Wood, being then a boy in his teens, that he first became acquainted with any defined form of religion or of public worship, for, at that time, he went with his school-master every Sunday to the quiet ancient chapel of Lincoln's Inn. Here the preaching of the Rev. Frederick Denison Maurice fell on the youth's naturally spiritual mind like water on thirsty ground, calling into life that love and profession of Christian truth which, in Ainger's paternal home, would have found no existence. And the school-master's admiration of Maurice was the making of Ainger's life. After he left Carlton Hill he became a student at King's College, London University, and attended Maurice's courses of lectures on Divinity and English Literature, experiencing likewise the boon of this great teacher's personal interest and direction. As Ainger's serious character was developed by Maurice, so Charles Dickens encouraged the remarkable dramatic and humorous vein in his composition, for Dickens's sons were the boy's school-friends, and at his house Ainger acted in private theatricals for many years. In the novelist's circle there were many who would have persuaded the youth to a professional career on the stage, and among his admirers here was Thackeray, of whom it is said that he rolled off his chair with laughter at Ainger's humorous and excellent singing, his Puck-like drolleries and his inexpressible gift of personation. The two main features in his character being thus wrought upon by Maurice and Dickens, the former happily prevailed, with the result

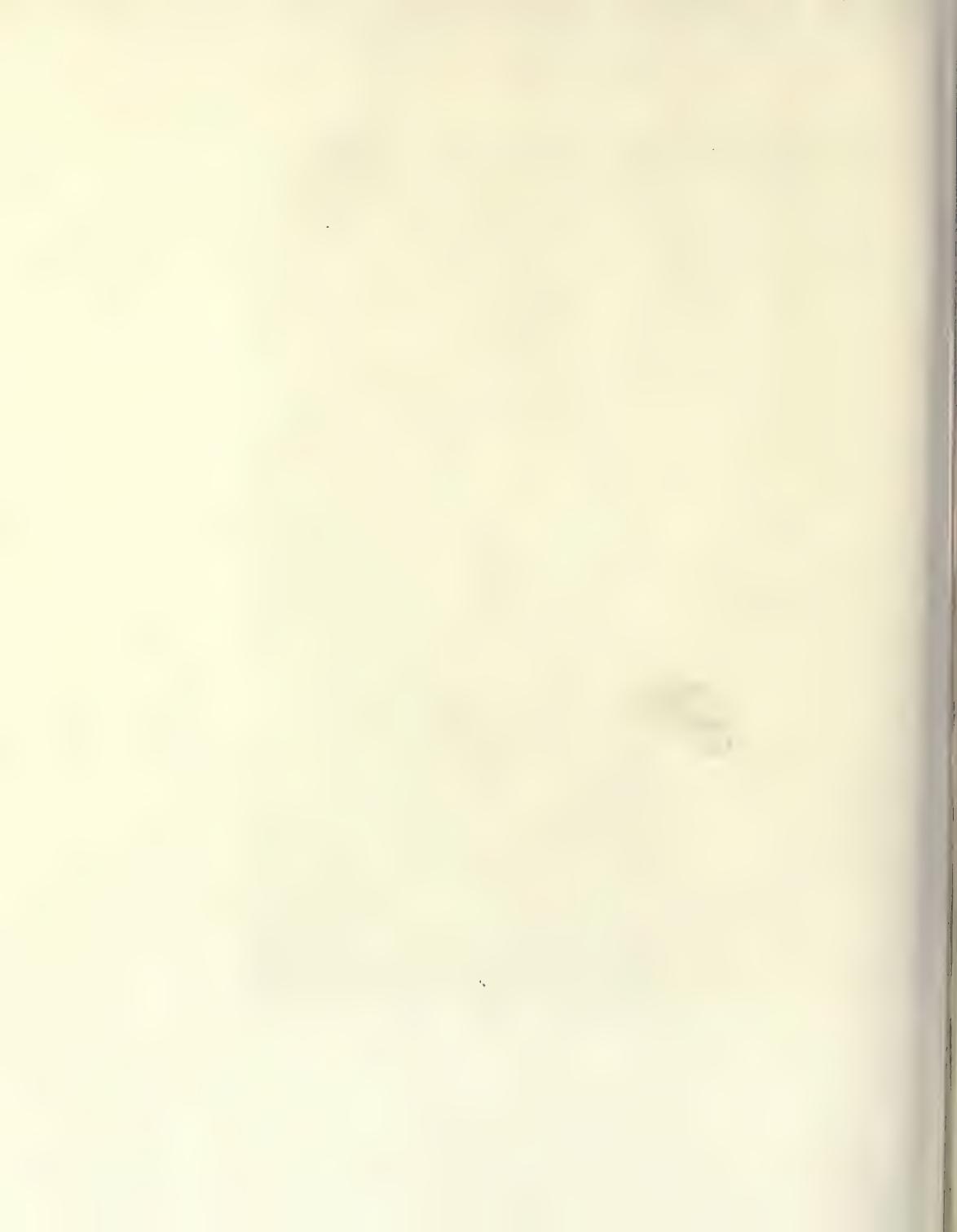
that he devoted his life to religion and literature, while giving his leisure to music and the drama. The call to the Church was clear and outweighed the inducements to the stage. The gift of humour remained ; that and the serious element walked beside one another with perfect decorum, for he was ever as dignified as he was droll, as profoundly moral as he was witty and entertaining. The present writer, as a girl, hearing him recite Shakespeare in a Hampstead drawing-room, was impressed by the inborn dramatic artist ; and at the Temple was possessed by the solemnity and spiritual inwardness of his Scripture-reading and preaching.

We may judge something of the theatrical powers of Alfred Ainger as a boy when we learn how he impressed a peace-loving old gentleman at Hampstead, whose sons had invited Alfred to act at their house. The occasion was the summer holidays of 1852, when the Ainger family made their annual visit to North End on the Heath. In a fright at the prospect of being disturbed a second time, the gentle host exclaimed : "I will not have that damned tragedian here ! " At Manor House, North End, which, after three hundred years, is still standing on the summit of its sloping velvet lawns among the great trees of its untouched grounds below the " Bull and Bush " Inn, the family of Johnstons came from London every year to spend their summers in this their country house. With them the Aingers enjoyed a delightful and lifelong intimacy, dating from the time when they had known Alfred

NORTH END, HAMPTON, IN 1830

*(From a Water-colour Drawing by George Barnard
in the North Collection, Hampton Town Hall)*





Ainger, senior, as the architect of their new house at Bayswater. The portraits which Miss Johnston made of young Alfred when he was eighteen years old and upwards were excellent, and quite the best that were produced during his young days. Hampstead in the fifties was still an independent rural town with its own Assembly Rooms, where the literary conversazioni included distinguished representatives of letters and of art. This neighbourhood, in the middle of the nineteenth century, remained distinctive, and as yet unflooded by that tide of population which gradually swept over it until it was merged in the ocean of the great city. When Mr. Ainger, the architect, his son and two daughters went to live in St. John's Wood, that district remained still unfinished, and young Alfred writes in a family magazine: "Ours is a new neighbourhood, one of the growing offshoots of a growing metropolis. Here are further encroachments upon Nature, slices of turf cut from the surface, rolled up like jam pudding and piled in heaps. New roads are permeating in all directions apparently made of dustbins, for a substratum of oyster-shells and decayed shoes is plainly visible. An adventurous lark sometimes comes and sings over the doomed land, but it quickly flies away countryward."

When the Rev. Alfred Ainger was thirty-nine years of age, he again came to Hampstead, being at that time in search of a house in which to domesticate his nephews, his nieces and himself, their guardian; and it must surely have been the memories of his boyhood

which now drew him here in 1876 when he took the house at Upper Terrace. During the previous ten years, since he had become Reader of the Temple, he had lived in rooms in town while regarding the house of his sister, Mrs. Roscow, as a second home, for between her and himself the tie of family affection was of an unusual nature. This elder Miss Ainger, afterwards Adeline Roscow, had been as it were a maternal sister to her delicate young brother Alfred since the day when their mother died, leaving him an infant of two years of age. When Adeline Roscow became a widow her brother proved to be the strength and the best friend of herself and her children ; and it was after her own unexpected death that he took possession of her two sons and two daughters, adapting—in fact, almost revolutionising—his domestic life to their needs ; with the result that their devotion to the already exceptional uncle was increased to that of a filial love. In return for the sacrifices which he made on their behalf they became the joy of his home ; his declining health in his later years was strengthened by the companionship of his elder niece, Miss Margaret Roscow, who remained unmarried, and stayed beside him until his death.

While living in Upper Terrace for thirteen years, how familiar and oft-traversed must have been that portion of the Grove, passing Sir Gilbert Scott's house, under the aged trees towards du Maurier's home, into which the artist had moved two years before Ainger settled so near to him. Thus their acquaintance began as early as 1876, though the remarkable intimacy

of the two friends did not fully develop until the eighties. Other personal friends of Canon Ainger in Hampstead, were Sir Spencer Wells and his family, Mr. Henry Holiday, Mrs. Rundle Charles and, as has already been mentioned in the account of Church Row, Miss Margaret Gillies, the painter. The last years of this aged lady's life were much sweetened by Ainger's frequent, almost daily visits ; she loved to recount and he to hear the events of her young days lived in a by-gone period when she made many visits to Wordsworth's home in the Lake District. There she painted the poet's portrait. Another portrait which she had painted in her early life was that of Leigh Hunt, a much-treasured picture which she presented to her new and dear friend Canon Ainger before her death in 1887.

Ainger's personality was felt in Hampstead in a much larger circle than that merely of his immediate friends, for in addition to his writings—principally the biography of Charles Lamb, and his edition of Lamb's Essays—Ainger's lectures, his literature classes, and his Shakespeare readings familiarised him to appreciative and discerning residents. His efforts on behalf of the public library were assiduous. On finding that workmen did not avail themselves of the privilege of the institution, being conscious of their old clothes, it is characteristic of his consideration for the feelings of the poor that he had a back door made to the building after which these men slipped in unobserved, and benefited by the use of the books as well as did their

better-clad neighbours. Music was a subject which was as dear to Alfred Ainger as literature, and one in which he was almost as able. There was a great development in Hampstead through his influence ; he had not sat long on the Concerts Committee before the music in this part of London was raised to a position in the first rank.

In the year 1899 he removed from Upper Terrace to a house at five minutes' distance, called The Glade, situated at the bottom of Branch Hill, facing the slope of grass below Judges' Walk. Here he lived for nine months in each year, the remaining three months being spent in official residence at Bristol, of which cathedral he had been made canon in 1887. In 1892, his health being more than usually difficult, he resigned his Readership and took two years of travel before the retirement of Dean Vaughan, who was still Master of the Temple and ninety-one years of age. In 1894, Lord Rosebery offered the Mastership to Canon Ainger, who accepted it and moved, with his nieces, into the official residence at the Temple in the autumn of that year. Thus, in the house which had been so familiar to him for twenty-eight years he now settled most naturally, while every official and servant as well as every lawyer within the Temple precincts knew him intimately, and loved him for his various characteristics, including a peculiar courtesy, personal interest and sincere kindness. His daily surroundings were harmonious with the dignity of his mind and his advanced years. One of his greatest delights here was

his musical friendship with the organist of the Temple Church.

Canon Ainger continued thus to live until 1904, in the February of which year, when on a visit to his married niece Mrs. Evans, he succumbed to the effects of an attack of influenza and died in her home, Darley Abbey, near to which he was buried in the parish churchyard, beside her husband, who had been one of his many intimate friends. Mr. Walter Evans had married the younger Miss Roscow, and had himself died as lately as the previous July. Mr. Evans's friendship, dating—under somewhat remarkable circumstances of introduction—from Canon Ainger's middle life, was one which had afforded him many intimate and delightful visits at this fine old country mansion in Derbyshire. At the beginning of the acute stage of his last illness, when he suddenly recognised the import of its symptoms, he sent messages by his elder niece to as many of his old companions as still remained alive, while saying to her, "My life has been happy and no one has had such friends as I have." Of his fellow collegiates, Alexander Macmillan, the publisher, ever increased in affection and sympathy. It was at his house at Tooting that Ainger as a young man became acquainted with many writers and painters ; above all, for his special happiness, with several musical people, including Sir George Grove, who edited the "Musical Dictionary," and who was the originator of the Crystal Palace Classical Concerts. Later in life Ainger was intimate with Mr. Andrew Lang and Mr. Edmund Gosse.

During the ten years in which Canon Ainger was Master of the Temple he had given up his lectures on literature, and devoted much time and careful preparation to his official sermons, which, as an accompaniment of his more responsible position, were now preached at the morning instead of at the afternoon services as had been the case during the twenty-eight years of his Readership. These later sermons showed a fidelity to, and a deepening of, the evangelical convictions which had taken possession of him so forcibly in his younger days. Ainger was profoundly serious on the subject of sin, and at a time when, it appeared to him, its deadly nature was being regarded too slackly and was even in danger of being explained away, he spoke much and most solemnly of his belief in the Atonement and Redemption as the vital truths of Christianity.

Concerning his life-long sense of fun, at this time of his promotion and new dignity we see that, though he refused, by reason of his public position, to contribute any more humorous articles to newspapers, he was ready as usual with his annual Christmas letter, always full of playfulness, to the old friends of his early curacy at Sheffield. To them he writes in December, 1894:—

I am sure you will not expect from me the childlike levity and frivolity with which I have been accustomed to address my friends on this anniversary. So that you will kindly be content this time with a few seasonable reflections. Let us enquire . . . What is the difference between a gardener, a billiard-marker, a gentleman and a verger?—Don't all speak at once when eating vulcanised greengages or the soothing banana, but serenely and thoughtfully

consider the following : the gardener minds his peas, the billiard-marker his cues, the gentleman his P's and Q's, and the verger his pews and keys. Chorus ; Oh ! there is no longer any doubt about it. He's out of his mind ! His recent promotion has been too much for his poor brain.

He refers to time-honoured tales thus :

Under the chestnut tree
Who loves to lie with me !

and to a book of reminiscences as "Rummynuisances." In the midst of a dolorous damp London fog he writes to a friend in the country : "I have a pound or two of the best Wallsend wandering about in my bronchial cavities." From the excessive headaches and speechless silent depression which for many years had been wont to confine him to his room for two or three days at a time, he would suddenly emerge ethereal, and like sunlight from behind a dark cloud break forth into singing. When seriously ill his sense of humour did not forsake him, and he sends word to a friend that he is very bad, with two trained nurses in attendance, and everything else on the same handsome scale. During his last visit to Darley Abbey he writes to Walford Davies, who succeeded Dr. Hopkins as organist of the Temple Church, and who had given to the Master much musical delight at all times, though particularly when his declining health necessitated imprisonment in the official house : in his letter Ainger describes himself as being ordered to suspend all medicine for a week, "like the Irishman's pig," he added, "who was starved and fattened on alternate

days to make the bacon streaky." Among his various signatures in writing to du Maurier, we find :—

Momus clericus,
A real merry cuss.

and he finished another letter to his dear artist thus : " Write soon and tell me I am forgiven, and that your heart is still with your little A. A."

Of the many portraits of Canon Ainger, perhaps the most expressive and gnome-like, and that which shows also a wondering and penetrating gaze into infinitude, the reader may find in the middle of the mantelpiece of the subscription library, Stanfield House, Hampstead : and appropriately so, for here he exerted himself so effectually on behalf of good literature, the promotion of which was one of the two objects of his professional career.

JOHN HENRY FOLEY.—Another house on Upper Terrace, one which stands at right angles to the row of those obviously older buildings, is called the Priory. Here John Henry Foley, an eminent Irish sculptor and Academician, lived, and here died in August, 1874. His fine statues of Goldsmith and Edmund Burke ornament the entrance to Trinity College, Dublin.

JUDGES' WALK AND CAPO DI MONTE.—We must not fail to follow the old houses round to the back of Upper Terrace, for here an exquisite view is awaiting us across the blue hills to Harrow. Moreover, seats invite us to rest under the branches of these ancient elms which form a dark foreground—almost a black

frame—to the pale, shadowy distance. The avenue so quietly hidden away here, to delight us by the discovery of its surprising beauty, was once appropriately described as Prospect Place, but was afterwards known as Judges' Walk. The latter name is explained by the fact that, the Law Courts being forsaken in 1665, during the great Plague in London, the Assizes were held on this healthy height overlooking the West Heath. Though quoted by some historians with uncertainty, this tradition seems to be well authenticated by Sir Francis Palgrave, who, in about the year 1857, discovered at the Record Office, a formal account of these same *al fresco* Assizes.

This unique avenue, at the back of the Upper Terrace, looks down at one end upon the road of Branch Hill, with which it communicates by a flight of steps cut in the earth, and supported by rough planks of tree-trunks ; these steps must inevitably have been used by Sarah Siddons at times, in approaching the garden at the back of her cottage.

MRS. SIDDONS.—The little house which has been called, during the last thirty years or more, Capo di Monte, still retained its old name of Siddons' Cottage when Mr. Magrath, founder of the Athenæum Club, resided in it : and it was already more than a hundred years old when that time-honoured actress, from whom it derived its name, came to spend here the summer of 1814. On the seat under the elms outside her little front garden let us linger, gazing over the country to Edgware, until, sleepy with the strong pure air which

comes to us over the hills, we may delude ourselves that, under the faded red tiles behind us, still dwells the great tragedy queen. Here she enjoyed a long visit to her favourite Hampstead, in the quiet of her life's evening, when the sounds of public applause were beginning to fade away, for she had at that time retired two years from the stage. Being in her sixtieth year, a period of seventeen years was still to elapse before the curtain of her life would descend. When living in this neighbourhood Mrs. Siddons was beloved for her warm-spirited kindness, a quality in her concerning which the poet Campbell wrote: "The benevolence of her heart makes her an honour to her sex, and to human nature." We see also that, owing to the perpetual youthfulness which her genius preserved, she was still capable of some frolics and tricks, for, in a draper's shop one day in the village, when buying some household material, she terrified the poor assistant by striking an attitude, fixing her powerful eye upon him, and, in tones which had made great audiences tremble and turn pale, she inquired: "Will it wash?" The village draper who reported the story need not have been ashamed of his perturbation had he known how that expressive voice had frightened even the fellow actors of this powerful *tragédienne*, and that Coleridge, in the sonnet addressed to Sarah Siddons, had spoken of

The shivering joys thy tones impart,
those tones which had caused great ladies to faint in the

theatre boxes, and Crabb Robinson to fall into a fit of hysterics. From under the elms of Judges' Walk Sarah Siddons could look straight forward to the place of the Flagstaff and the Pond, for Tudor Lodge had not in those days uprisen to obstruct the view thitherwards—had not, indeed, at that time been remotely conceived, and she could enjoy from her window the sense of uninterrupted space. In the northward direction there was clear access to the whole summit of the Heath, with its Whitestone Pond, in which Shelley was soon to swim his paper boats: on her left, below Judges' Walk, in the hollow of the grassy slope, lay a large silent pool, of which a picture is preserved, showing the water, which has long ago disappeared. Beyond this were seen the furze and the ferns, the little hills of golden sand and the valleys which, before the levelling of the ground, remained a marked feature of the western Heath, and, in the absence of the modern Branch Hill houses, Windsor Castle might be discerned in the distance.

Hampstead village, its Heath, and its other charms, were regarded at this time by the longing eyes of Londoners as a heaven of holiday resorts, none the less dear because lying within reach, being easy of access by the coach from St. Giles's, which travelled by short stages hither with several appointed stopping-places to pick up its passengers. The heights of Hampstead towered over the "Town," and the vision of it, together with the happier associations in the minds of those who had visited here, made it an object of pleasant

contemplation to residents in the north-western part of London. For example, Lord Foley, whose town house stood near All Souls' Church, Langham Place, resented, as an obstruction to his view of Hampstead, the building of the houses in Portland Place, and desired that that new road should be cut of an unusual breadth, as being the only method of preserving this distant prospect where his country house lay.

Another instance was that of Mrs. Siddons, who lived on the border of a stretch of land which afterwards became Regent's Park; the charm of her dwelling lay in the fine bay windows which looked towards the north. These yielded her the sense of freedom, for they opened out upon the many acres of the Marylebone Fields, beyond which, in the distance, the rising hill, the thick tall trees and the church spire of her beloved Hampstead uprose on the horizon. Marylebone Park and Fields had previously lain around the Manor House of Mary le Bourne as its demesne land, but these acres had been dissociated from the house by Charles I. In 1812 the Prince Regent began to level them, and have them laid out as a pleasure ground for the people. Certain portions were let on lease to public societies—the Zoological and Botanical, etc.—and others to nobles or gentlemen, who built private villas here—the Marquis of Hertford, St. Dunstan's Lodge in the Outer Circle, and the Marquis of Bute, St. John's in the Inner. The letting of these and other plots of land helped to defray the cost of laying out the rough ground in a garden-like

and cultured condition, a process which occupied a period of many years—from 1812 to 1838—when the finished work was thrown open to the public. The terraces of houses, all of which were named after Royalty—chiefly the ducal brothers of the Prince—were to stand at intervals round the Outer Circle: it was the tall houses of Cornwall Terrace which threatened to block out the beauties of the vernal landscape so dear to Mrs. Siddons. Making bold in her desperation, she appealed to the Regent, and, graciously allaying her apprehensions, H.R.H. commanded the architect, Mr. Nash, to plan Cornwall Terrace at a more convenient angle. Until the date of its destruction, early in the twentieth century, her house bore a medallion giving the date of the *tragédienne*'s death, which occurred there in 1831. The medallion, placed there in 1875, was preserved during the demolition of the building thirty years later, and with a pathetic fidelity to the old site, although shorn of all possible romance, it now adorns the exterior of the Bakerloo Tube Station! Sarah Siddons made her will in 1815, and, in addition to the “leasehold house in Upper Baker Street,” she left to her only remaining daughter Cecilia her “carriages, horses, plate, pictures, books, wine and furniture, with all the money in the house and at the bankers”: also the inkstand made from a portion of the mulberry tree planted by Shakespeare, and the pair of gloves worn by the great poet himself, which were given to the actress by Mrs. Garrick.

While Mrs. Siddons and her daughters were living in London, Mr. Siddons, or, as he was to his annoyance universally named, "Mrs. Siddons' husband," was residing at Bath for the good of his health, and, apparently, also for the peace of the family from whom he was parted.

Much of the mediocrity of this man's character expressed itself in the attitude with which he regarded his wife's fame, albeit acquired by her as the exclusive result of her own merits. No dramatic artist himself, though a follower of that profession, he found it a grievance that the girl of seventeen years of age to whom he had given his name should develop a brilliancy of power unsurpassed in stage history, while it was still said of himself that his personations were indifferently feeble—from *Harlequin* to *Hamlet*. Sarah Kemble, when marrying young William Siddons, cherished no illusions as to the worth of his dramatic endowment. Her father stormed on being informed of her secret wedding "to one of the worst performers in my company." "Have I not always forbidden, Madam, that you should become the wife of an actor?" His daughter replied that she had not disobeyed him!

Mrs. Siddons' home, previous to the purchase of the Upper Baker Street house in 1812, was the ivy-covered cottage, Westbourne Farm, where so many notable people came to do her homage, on Paddington Green: she dearly loved this kind of dwelling-place, and we may well believe therefore, that *Capo di Monte* was a spot after her own heart. That Mr. Siddons was able

to say a pretty and generous thing about his own wife, though apparently he did not enjoy other people's doing so, we are delighted to find from some verses which he wrote concerning the minuteness of her cottage on Paddington Green: he closes a very amateur piece with these lines:—

Perhaps you'll cry on hearing this,
What! everything so very small!
No, she who made it what it is
Has greatness which makes up for all.

And though it was not at this picturesque little home that the actress died, she chose to be buried in the parish churchyard which lay beside it.

The grave at Paddington Green has been visited by many English and American devotees: of the latter, and belonging to Sarah Siddons' own profession, was the good and beautiful Mary Anderson, who used to carry flowers thither on Sunday afternoons. Miss Anderson, with her parents, was a permanent resident in Frog Lane for a year or two before her marriage, which took place at the old Catholic chapel in Holly Place.

CHAPTER VIII

VALE OF HEALTH

HUNT COTTAGE AND LEIGH HUNT

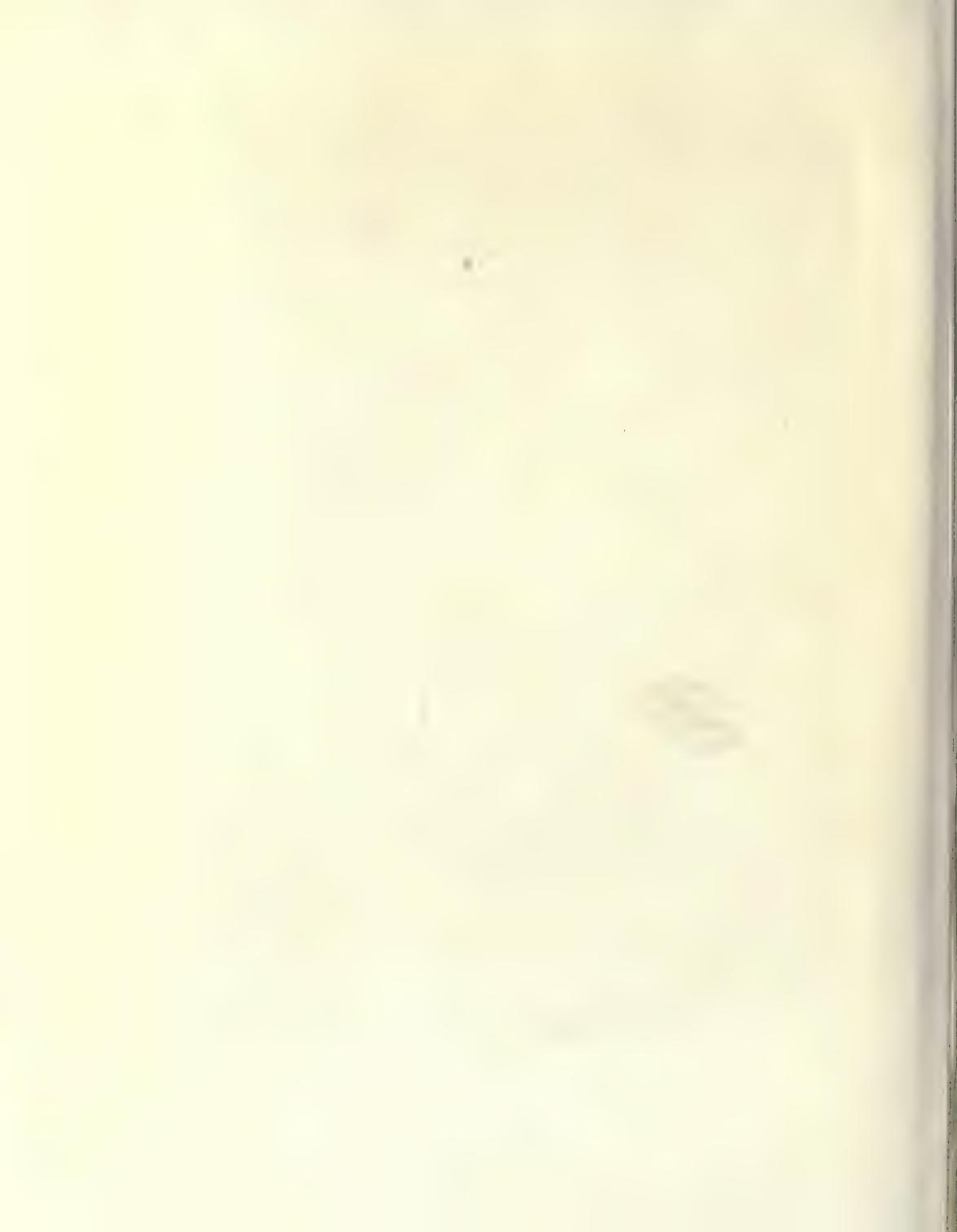
JOHN KEATS IN WELL WALK

VALE OF HEALTH.—Emerging from the Avenue of Judges' Walk and standing again by the Whitestone Pond, looking east we see below us the Vale of Health, and though it were possible to descend upon this cluster of houses in the hollow by means of the steep grassy hill, it will be better for our geographical purpose to trace the course of the long East Heath Road, and enter that road at the summit on the right of the apparently modern house Bell Moor, standing where, twenty years ago, were three tall Queen Anne houses. They, with their three staircases, are incorporated in the present structure.

Descending East Heath Road we turn off from it on the left hand to arrive at the Vale of Health by the carriage roadway in search of Leigh Hunt's little abode. Nor must we be satisfied by seeing the name of Hunt Cottage on a door which opens on to the street, for this is of a comparatively commonplace appearance, and disappoints our desire for romance; but, continuing along that main thoroughfare and bearing to the left, we soon come to a footpath which turns off, again on the left, and leads us beside some railed-in trees. It is opposite this enclosure that Hunt's little dwelling-place appears really picturesque, its door-windows



JOHN KEATS



opening on a miniature garden, and a creeper overhanging the balcony. Many people think that this weather-boarded cottage was occupied by Leigh Hunt from 1816 to 1819,¹ and that it was here he received his distinguished literary guests. Neither was this place of their meeting pulled down, as we are told by Walter Thornbury in his "Old and New London"—a statement which we are happily now able to dispute. Two doors away, indeed, there previously stood another cottage, resembling Hunt's, which, decayed by age, was taken down, being replaced by South Villa, the tall plain brick house which we see standing there most unbeautifully in its stead. At the demolition of that cottage were discovered some lines of Cowper's, diamond-scratched on a window-pane by Lord Byron who had lived for a time there :—

Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade
Where rumours of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Shall never reach me more.

Byron's visit to the Vale of Health lasted only for a summer—it was probably in the year of Waterloo, as suggested by these lines, for he had left here a few months before Leigh Hunt arrived in 1816.

LEIGH HUNT—BORN 1784: DIED 1859.—The Rev. Mr. Hunt, father of Leigh Hunt, in his day a popular

¹ The late Mr. Paxon, of High Street—who lived to a great age and whose father was rate-collector in the Vale of Health—remembers being sent as a very young boy with a message to Mr. Hunt's cottage—the same which is now standing.

and ornate preacher, tutor also in the Duke of Chandos's family, lived in Hampstead Square towards the close of the eighteenth century: his wife, an American lady, though dying in a distant part of London, was, by her own urgent desire, brought back for burial to the Hampstead churchyard.

Their son Leigh seems ever to have cherished a fascinated memory of this neighbourhood, inhabiting at one time a cottage in the hamlet of West End, a remote little corner in the Hampstead parish. He described this abode as "a really *bona fide* cottage with humble ceilings and unsophisticated staircase." At sixteen years of age he produced a book of poems under the name of "*Juvenilia*" and, when still a clerk in a law office, began to write for the newspapers, publishing a volume of theatrical criticisms in 1807. In the following year he gave up his clerkship and devoted himself entirely to poetry and journalism, editing his brother John's new paper, which was to be devoted to politics and literary criticism. In this publication, namely the *Examiner*, the brothers came very near, on several occasions, to offending in high quarters; and, after thus conducting their liberal warfare for five years, were caught in an utterance concerning the Prince Regent—"‘This Adonis in loveliness’ was a corpulent man of fifty, a libertine in disgrace . . . a companion of gamblers and demireps." This brought upon the brothers a sentence of two years' imprisonment—1813 to 1815—with the addition of £1,000 fine. While for this reason confined in Horsemonger gaol

from the age of twenty-nine to thirty-one, Leigh Hunt showed himself, as ever, full of courage and optimism ; he continued to write his long poem, the story of "Rimini," which had been begun in the previous year and was published in 1816, making by far his most important mark in English literature. Considered a hero from without the walls, he received personal sympathy and visits from most of the interesting men of letters, philosophers and Liberal statesmen of that day ; acquiring, indeed, in this way many valuable friendships. In prison he published a former poem ; wrote, also, three sonnets to Hampstead, his visits to which beloved spot were now painfully longed for and denied. The sonnets were dated respectively Surrey Gaol, August 27, 1813 ; Surrey Gaol, August, 1814 ; and from the same place November, 1814.

After his release, February 3, 1815, he wrote three more sonnets to Hampstead ; the first beginning :—

The baffled spell that bound me is undone
And I have breathed once more beneath thy sky,
Lovely-browed Hampstead . . .

the second :—

A steeple issuing from a leafy rise
With farmy fields in front and sloping green,
Dear Hampstead, is thy southern face serene . . .
Silently smiling on approaching eyes ;

and lastly the following sonnet :—

As one who after long and far-spent years
• • • •
So I, first coming on my haunts again,

In pause and stillness of the early prime
Stood thinking of the past and present time

Till the fresh morning breeze and startled birds,
Loosened my long-suspended breath in words . . .

For the “sake of his health and his old walks in the fields” Hunt moved to Hampstead, where he might repay himself for the loss of pure air from which he had suffered during the term of his confinement; for though he had not been denied intellectual interests, owing to the visits of distinguished men who had found their way to him—the visitors included Lord Brougham, Lord Byron, Moore and others who had in this way made his acquaintance—the picturesque sights and rural sounds which he loved had been cruelly lacking, and he was now eager to revenge himself for their loss. He was fortunate at this time in finding a home in so healthy and charming a place as the Vale of Health, at that date as rural and lovely a spot as any the country could offer. A modest home it must be, for the irreverent utterance on Royalty had taken £1,000 from his always insufficient funds. So tiny was the cottage that Hunt “defied anyone to have lived in a smaller house” than he.

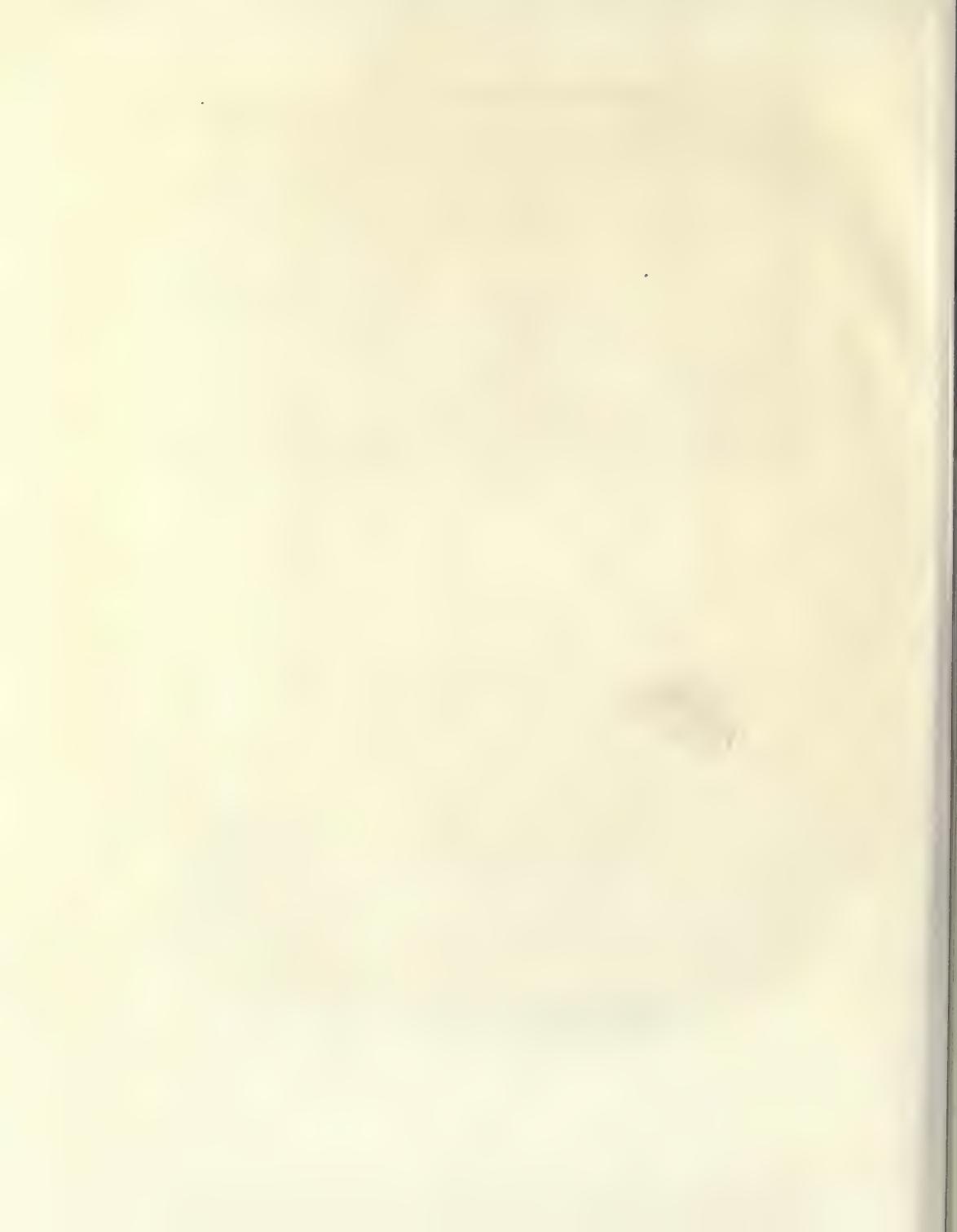
Having re-established his social life here, he was frequently surrounded by his friends, Charles Lamb, Haydon, Hazlitt, John Hamilton Reynolds, Coleridge—and Shelley, who at this time came up frequently from Great Marlow to see Hunt and stayed in lodgings in Pond Street. These and other men formed a circle



THE VALE OF HEALTH



THE VALE OF HEALTH POND



which the enthusiasm and personal charm of Hunt, rather than the quality of his poetic work, had gathered together ; for this critic and essayist possessed a power to inspire other poets to better work than he ever achieved on his own account. Nor were the well-known kindness and proverbial amiability of Hunt merely superficial characteristics as is frequently supposed. “ Incomparable as a fire-side companion ! ” said Charles Lamb.

Leigh Hunt’s correspondence published in 1861 has revealed an unexpected strength in his character, showing him, indeed, to have been a silent hero, striking no martyred pose, but suffering, beneath his fresh gaiety, from a distressing domestic circumstance, the opprobrium of which he was willing to take upon himself rather than that one near to him should be defamed. Miss Bird who in her youth helped to save Leigh Hunt’s correspondence for publication passed over certain letters by saying that “ he suffered, in scrupulous silence, the most intimate indignities man or woman can suffer, and freely took the blame of others on his own shoulders.” Leigh Hunt’s family physician, Dr. George Bird, who left London to spend a healthy old age on Windmill Hill, Hampstead, communicated many things about his literary patient to Mr. Ernest Rhys, who tells us :—

There was a shadow in Leigh Hunt’s house as his physician might well know ; but his was a brave philosophy, and he bore quietly the indignity brought on him by others. He carried it off so well that only the keenest of observers were likely to penetrate his mask.

In the story of "Rimini" it was from experience that the author knew so well how to describe

The affectation of a bright-eyed ease,
An air of something quite serene and sure,
As if to seem so were to be secure.

The impecunious state of Hunt in middle life, and the reputation which he possessed for requesting loans of money and of goods from his friends, caused him to be mercilessly misrepresented. In the person of Harold Skimpole, Charles Dickens's caricature indelibly stamps this upon him. But there are those who, believing in the nobility of heart in Leigh Hunt, are relieved to learn that this characteristic of borrowing money arose from the actions of another—that it was not his fault so much as his unmerited misfortune.¹ Mr. Vincent Hunt seems to be referring to this trouble when he writes the "Sonnet on His Sleeping Father." After describing, in verse, the firelight on the study walls which were covered with books, he continues:—

Alas ! that that so-loved, fine face should be
Scarr'd by life's suffering more than by its years,
So that in calmest sleep it is not free
From sorrow-marks that dim mine eyes with tears,
And yet (thank God) that patient, kind face wears
A youthful vigour still, divine to see.

The sympathetic son, who was unavoidably aware of the cause of his father's sorrow, died when he was little

¹ A very strong article from Swinburne appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, July, 1902, in defence of Hunt's character. In this, Swinburne refers to the gossip and slanders—including the well-known story of Carlyle's sovereigns on the mantelshelf in Cheyne Row. The poet protested that it was time all that tittle-tattle should finish.

more than twenty years of age, and the father, in his kindness desiring to reassure Dr. Bird, wrote to him :—

You have done everything for the dear one that skill and zeal could do, and you and I, and all of us, are friends for life : Your ever obliged and affectionate, Leigh Hunt.

And now one word concerning Leigh Hunt's quality and style of poetry. When in 1816 he began to write "Rimini" it was his desire to revolutionise the oppressive poetical fashion of the period, and to compose verse conspicuously free from the pedantry and effort which, with Pope's heroics setting the law, had been echoed *ad nauseam* throughout the remainder of the eighteenth century. As a relief from this it was Hunt's wish to introduce an easy and natural style, "a free and idiomatic cast of language"; but in the effort to do so he grievously failed to preserve dignity of tone; his simplicity was not that simplicity of greatness which shows the touch of genius; rather, his style was one of familiarity, triviality and an affectation of ease, which gained for him a very fair share of contemptuous criticism. Sir Sidney Colvin writes :—

The pleasant creature does but exaggerate in this poem ("Rimini") the chief foibles of his prose, redoubling his vivacious airs where they are least in place, and handling the great passions of the theme with a tea-party manner and vocabulary that are intolerable.

These attempts at literary revolutionising, along with his Liberal political offences were, no doubt, largely the cause of that vicious hatred which Hunt inspired

in the wrathful spirit of the high Tory Scotch editors, and thus brought upon himself that series of attacks, directed not only against himself, but also against his chief followers. These grossly offensive articles, which began to appear in 1817, were published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, edited by Lockhart, the son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott. Lockhart possessed exceptional gifts in this line. Some four years later, however, he suffered a sharp onslaught on his own account, from a publication called *The London*, the editor of which, John Scott, was an able journalist. On reading this article, Lockhart angrily demanded satisfaction from its author for having written about him—on this one occasion, and, as it were, only in just return of offensive language—a pugilistic feat which the fiery Lockhart himself performed every day of his life. A duel was fought by Lockhart's friend, Jonathan Christie. It took place by moonlight in the Chalk Farm fields, February 16, 1821. John Scott was shot, and died of his wounds within a week, leaving a young widow with two children.

It is necessary to remember the ferocious character of Lockhart's behaviour in this instance so that we may estimate, at its real value, his attack upon Keats' "Endymion," the attack which gave rise to so much indignation in Shelley and other sympathisers, and which was mentioned by Byron as "the homicidal article."

JOHN KEATS.—Among a circle of youths who admired Leigh Hunt for his Liberal politics, his

essays, and his journalism, was Charles Cowden Clarke—in later life the Shakespeare commentator. Young Clarke had been very kindly received by Hunt when he had called on him in prison, and had been encouraged by him in aspiring to a literary life. On the day of Hunt's emancipation this young man called, among many other visitors, to congratulate the hero upon his return to his home. On leaving Hunt's house Clarke met an old schoolfellow with whom, though eight years younger than himself, he had had close companionship for some years, and with him had spent every leisure moment in reading the standard works of poetry and prose. This friend, now a medical student, still hungering after poetry, put into Clarke's hands a sonnet—his own work—entitled "On the day Mr. Leigh Hunt left prison," and which ran as follows :—

What though for showing truth to flattered State,
Kind Hunt was shut in prison, yet has he
In his immortal spirit been as free
As the sky-searching lark, and as elate.
Minion of grandeur ! think you he did wait ?
Think you he nought but prison-walls did see ? . . .

The sonnet, which was signed " John Keats," found its way, by the good offices of Cowden Clarke, into the possession of him in whose honour it had been composed, and thus ensured for the writer a personal acquaintance which, as will presently appear, influenced his whole life.

The school at which the two youths had been friends together belonged to the Rev. John Clarke, father of Charles Cowden Clarke, and was established

in a country mansion amid fine grounds at Enfield, a lovely spot not far from Edmonton, some dozen miles north of London.

John Keats and his brothers had been sent here because their parents, who were anxious for their best education, could not afford to send them to Harrow. Mr. Clarke's was an excellent school, and the one at which their uncle, Captain Jennings, R.N.—an interesting hero in their eyes—had been educated before them.

Thomas Keats, their father, had come up from Devonshire, and taken a situation as ostler at John Jennings's livery stables at the sign of the "Swan and Hoop," Finsbury Pavement, which stood at that time facing the fields at Moorgate. Here he became head ostler before he was twenty, and married his master's daughter, Frances Jennings: at which time the owner of the business retired, to live at Edmonton, leaving everything to the able management of his son-in-law. John, the eldest child of Thomas and Frances Keats, was born at the Finsbury hostelry, but his parents soon moved to a private house half a mile up the City road at Craven Street. Cowden Clarke tells that his father, the headmaster of Enfield School, admired, and no doubt marvelled at, the well-mannered refinement and seeming good breeding of Thomas Keats when he came here to visit his sons, describing his appearance as resembling that of the eldest—John—for he had a lively energetic countenance, and the same powerful head with large hazel eyes.

John seems to have spent seven years at Enfield School where, before he began to be so much absorbed in literature—taking his meals with a book propped up before his plate—he was regarded by his schoolfellows as an exciting entertainment. A generous, impulsive youngster, alternating between torrents of tears and shouts of hilarious mirth, he was, at every unexpected moment, a ready and fierce fighter on his own and on his two brothers' behalf. When he was only nine years old, and George and Tom were respectively seven and five—their sister Fanny being but an infant—Mr. Keats suddenly died as the result of a fall from his horse when he was riding home one evening. He was buried at St. Stephen's Church, Coleman Street, in the City, 1804. (The rector of that church referred to his register in reply to our inquiries, and states that the interment took place in the north aisle of the building).

After a widowhood of mere months, and a speedy re-marriage with William Rawlings, followed by a separation from him, the young mother and four children came to live with Mrs. Jennings at Edmonton. Thomas Keats had left his widow and children £8,000, which sum seems to have been personally aspired to by the unsatisfactory Rawlings, but it was eventually divided between the Keats children. Mr. Jennings, their grandfather, dying about this time, left his widow an income of £200 a year, and to his daughter Frances £50 a year with a reversionary interest to her four children; also £1,000 to those children direct. At Edmonton the home was happy, the aged grandmother

was good to the children, and the stepfather's name was never mentioned, nor himself ever heard of again. The young mother was intensely devoted to her eldest son John, and he, in his turn, to her: but in this new domestic arrangement she lived only five years, that is to say, six years altogether after the death of her first husband: for she went off in a rapid consumption, consequent, it is thought, upon a chill taken when at some evening entertainment—she being an exceedingly lively person with a passion for amusement.

The grandmother, who was then seventy-four years of age, was thus left with the care of the children, of whom she speaks with a gracious, elderly affection, and in whose favour she makes her will, appointing her friend Mr. Abbey—wholesale tea-merchant of St. Pancras Lane—their guardian.

In the autumn of 1810, John had only just completed his fifteenth year: but off he was marched away from his brothers, his literature, and his Cowden Clarke, to be bound for five years as an apothecary surgeon to James Hammond, of Edmonton, where he spent the next four years, working conscientiously, and without any expressed aversion for his craft. But his love of literature found him effacing the short distance between Edmonton and Enfield as frequently as he could, sitting in the arbour of the school-garden with his friend Cowden Clarke, reading Spenser and Chaucer, and finishing his translation of the *Æneid*. A year before the end of his apprenticeship to the surgeon, Keats was roused to one of his characteristic outbursts

of indignation ; in consequence of which he renounced the society of the provincial sawbones, and came to London, in the summer of 1814, when he was nineteen years old. In the following December the grandmother died : little Fanny was removed to the care of Mrs. Abbey, while George and Tom, on finishing school, were placed as clerks in the office of the tea-merchant, whom they warmly detested. They did not, however, domesticate with him at Walthamstow, but took rooms with their brother, and the three lived together in the Poultry.

As a student of Guy's Hospital,¹ during the past two years, Keats had lodged, at first alone, and afterwards with other medical students, among whom he was known as "Little Keats"—he measured but five feet two inches when full grown—also as the "cheerful, crotchety rhymester," for his heart was full of verse, though his head followed the line of his appointed duty.

As time went on, John, always energetic and industrious, passed his examinations well and became a good operator. His mind, however, was at the same time completely abstracted in the realm of the spirit : hence, upon reviewing an instance in which he had opened a man's temporal artery, the student became seriously alarmed when he recalled the condition of his thoughts during the process. Though he had done it with a perfection of nicety, he clearly saw that he must not

¹ The teaching of St. Thomas's and Guy's Hospitals was at that time combined.

take upon him any longer the responsibility of using surgical instruments.

In October, 1816, attaining the age of twenty-one, when he acquired his little patrimony of £2,000, John Keats rejoiced his literary friends and invited the anathema of his guardian, by abandoning medicine, and embracing his well-beloved poetry as a profession.

When Cowden Clarke, as has been mentioned, took Keats' sonnet to Leigh Hunt after that hero's emancipation from prison, Hunt expressed himself desirous of a personal acquaintance with the young author, and thus Keats was brought for his first visit to the kindly and responsive critic. This visit took place, as Clarke asserts and clearly proves, in the Vale of Health cottage at Hampstead: though Leigh Hunt, in speaking about it some years afterwards, remembered the incident clearly, but had become confused in the question of his surroundings, for he states that he first saw Keats while he was still living in London. At Hunt's cottage, the literary rendezvous in the Vale of Health, Keats, shrinking and timid concerning his secret hope, gradually grew in self-confidence. Hunt's delight in the youth's genius, his personal affection for him and his influence over him were considerable; and before the poet—still a medical student—had composed verses enough to publish a volume, his earliest lines were brought out by the editor of the *Examiner*; the sonnet "O solitude! if I with thee must dwell," appearing under date of May 6, 1816.

Thus the name of John Keats, supported by that of Leigh Hunt, was launched on its public career. Not that this personal association proved an unmixed advantage to the youth, seeing that his discipleship prejudiced him to such a ferocious extent in the eyes of the *Blackwood* editors ; but the friendship was, in itself, a delight to both Hunt and Keats, and to the latter, at that time, a distinct boon, and one for which he ever remained grateful, in spite of what ensued ; seeing that, before he had ceased to be a medical dresser at the hospitals, he was thus encouraged by a critic eleven years his senior, and brought into close contact with many of the first rank in the profession to which he silently aspired, ardently desiring to call it his own.

It was as a soul set free that Keats, escaped from Little Britain in the City and leaning against a gate of Lord Mansfield's park, wrote :—

To one who has been long in city pent
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open space of heaven—to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.

And one autumn night on walking away from the congenial company in the valley of the Heath, he describes in another sonnet how—

Keen, fitful gusts are whispering here and there
Among the bushes half leafless and dry ;
The stars look very cold about the sky
And I have many miles on foot to fare.

Yet feel I little of the cool, bleak air,
Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily.

For I am brimful of the friendliness
That in a little cottage I have found.

At Hunt's cottage, when the conversation had been carried late into the night, with a heart of hospitality as great as his dwelling was small, the host made for the unrobust youth a sofa-bed in that "parlour which was no larger than an old mansion's closet." Spending the night upon that impromptu erection, Keats wrote the lines beginning :—

What is more gentle than a wind in summer ?

the poem is called "Sleep and Poetry," and is headed by that quotation from Chaucer,

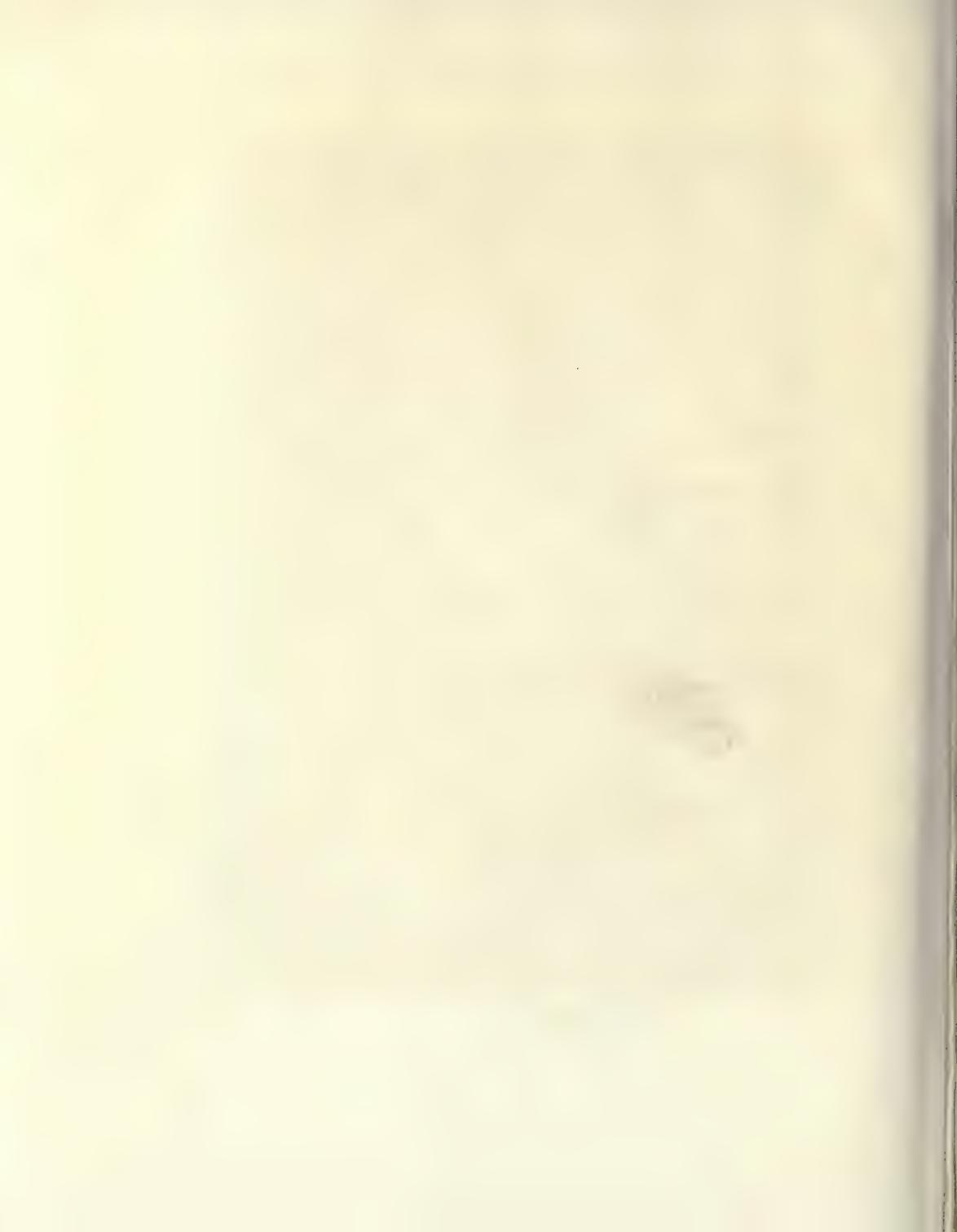
As I lay in my bed, slepe full unmete was unto me,

from which it would appear, fortunately for posterity, that the extempore resting-place yielded a wakeful night and more poetry than sleep.

KEATS IN WELL WALK.—On his return from the Vale of Health by the footpath over the fields to London, Keats must first have mounted from the valley to the East Heath Road, and, in the darkness, found his way under the thick tall trees by the old chalybeate well, where the gay Pump Room of the early period had long ago subsided, the Walk being lighted now only by the oil lamps of the "Green Man" Inn, which lay beyond it. Behind this small inn stood the cottage of the one and only Hampstead



WELL WALK, KEATS'S SEAT



postman, which cottage, it must be noted, in the face of erroneous statements, was entirely demolished in the year 1849, to yield space for the rebuilding and enlarging of the old hostelry: after which conversion the "Green Man" was known as the "Wells" Tavern. Meanwhile, however, this little abode became the home of John Keats, as also of George Keats and Tom: and after the poet became famous, postman Bentley was proud enough to talk about his distinguished tenants, and "how my good wife did for the young gents."

For the purpose of seclusion and composition, John Keats, having spent the month of April, 1817, at Carisbrooke, and the following month of May at Margate, came to Hampstead for the summer, and left it early in the autumn of that year to stay with his friend Bailey at Oxford. Returning to Hampstead at the beginning of October, he remained here until March, 1818.

Meanwhile, George Keats, who resented the patronage of Mr. Abbey's junior partner, and quite failed to appreciate tea-merchandise in London, evolved a plan for buying land in Kentucky; also for marrying, on this side of the Atlantic, Miss Georgina Wylie, the daughter of an English naval officer. This lady had been, since her engagement to George, one of the poet's most congenial friends. It was seldom Keats found anything companionable among women, of whom he remarked, "he would rather give to them a sugarplum than his time." This happy exception, however, introduced by Haslam and Severn, "possessed wit and

sentiment." To her, with her husband, John addressed those long journal letters which are the most intimate in his correspondence ; and concerning her he says to George : " I have known through you not only a sister-in-law, but a glorious human being."

The exceptional love of Keats for his brothers—strengthened by the early death of their parents—continued as strong as when they were boys at school. Their sympathetic comradeship, when living together, whether in London or Hampstead, shows itself in his correspondence and in his poems. In one of the early sonnets describing their sense of companionship around the " friendly crackling fire," he writes :—

This is your birthday, Tom, and I rejoice
That thus it passes smoothly, quietly,
Many such eves of gently whispering noise
May we together pass, and calmly try
What are this world's true joys, ere the great Voice
From its fair face shall bid our spirits fly.

This delicate young brother, on whose behalf Keats, at school, had been ever ready to double his fists, and had been known to box the head of the usher himself, understood the poet better than did anyone else in the world. George, though two years younger than John, and possessed of all his lively energy, was of a more practical temperament and without the disadvantage of that alternating morbid tendency which the poet so readily admits was a stumbling-block to himself : when oppressed in this way he says that his mind was strengthened by the healthy breeze of his brother's,

and that George had always "stood between me and the world." This friendship, in spite of distance, never waned. Sympathy with the one and reliance upon the other of his brothers composed a feeling for them which the poet himself described as "passing the love of women," and which filled his heart at this period, to the exclusion of any more romantic attachment. There is another early fraternal sonnet "To my brother George": also with the same title is found one of those poems which Keats calls Epistles.

When George had gone to Kentucky, the slow sailing-boat of those days which carried the poet's long journal letters, carried also, for the approval of his brother and sister-in-law, every new manuscript which was written. Seeing that Mr. and Mrs. George Keats remained in America, and that their descendants grew up in that country, it is only natural to attribute to this fraternal fidelity the fact of the Americans becoming such devoted Keatsians. As we have seen in another chapter, they erected a monument in the parish church to the poet whom they had thus, from his early days, been called upon to admire. The Epistle "To my Brother George" ends:—

Now I direct my eyes unto the west,
Which at this moment is in sunbeams dressed.
Why westward turn? 'Tis but to say adieu!
'Tis but to kiss my hand, dear George, to you.

To John, as the eldest of the family, the other two boys looked as to their authority in matters of judgment and domestic movement: and with regard to

George's emigration we read that John "gave his consent" to the idea.

Fanny Keats had been sent to boarding-school, and it was considered by John a matter of deep regret when she was taken thence to the house of the custodians at Walthamstow, where she had no little difficulty in obtaining the money due to her from her father and grandparents. During Fanny's life with the Abbeys, John, whose influence was not liked, and whose visits were all but prohibited by the unlovely couple, manages to go and see his sister as often as possible, and continually writes to her—even when he is ill in bed—letters containing encouragement, advice and some humour. In Well Walk, he tells her, there are two tender-hearted maiden ladies living next door, who over-feed their fat poodle, "and the corpulent little beast has to be dragged along the road for exercise." In a letter to Bailey from Scotland, he says: "I could not have had a greater pleasure in these parts than your mention of my sister. I am very much prisoned from her, and I am afraid it will be some time before I can take her to many places I wish." The brother manages, however, despite her prison-keepers, to fetch the poor child to Well Walk to say good-bye to Tom, at the time of whose death she was fifteen years old.¹

The departure of George and his bride from Liver-

¹ When two of her brothers were dead, and the third had gone to America, Fanny Keats must have felt forsaken in England, alone; but at the age of twenty-three she married Señor Llanos, an accomplished Spanish gentleman in the Diplomatic Service of his country, and she became the mother of four children, living to be eighty-three years of age.

pool, which took place in July, 1818, was witnessed by John Keats and his friend Charles Armitage Brown, with whom he was about to start on a walking tour through the English Lakes and in Scotland. With his brother and sister-in-law Keats travelled to Liverpool by coach, and afterwards undertook the too heroic expedition which, exposing him to rain and fatigue, secretly developed the first symptoms of the consumption which ended in his death. In Inverness he consulted a doctor concerning the bad throat from which he now began to suffer, and the doctor sent him home.

And if Keats had not returned from Scotland at this time on account of his own health, he would have been obliged to do so for the sake of his younger brother. Tom, in consumption, having temporarily improved a little during a winter spent at Teignmouth, was then living in his lodgings at Hampstead, seriously declining, to the alarm of his friends. And John, who had nursed him in Devonshire, now devoted himself again to the invalid, but with an assiduity and an imaginative sympathy which his sensitive nature found most painful. The moral tie between these brothers was very close, and the suffering of poor Tom, in this advanced state of his fatal malady, possessed John, when he absented himself for necessary rest, to an alarming degree. The solitary watching continued through the late autumn, and closed in the first week of December: for Tom Keats, "very tall and narrow-chested," as Brown described him, died at Well Walk on December 2, 1818, when he had just completed his

nineteenth year. He was buried, not at Hampstead, but at St. Stephen's Church, Coleman Street, where his father and others of the family had been buried before him. A portrait of Tom Keats, by Severn, was exhibited in the Royal Academy.

From his house at Hampstead, Armitage Brown, writing at this time, said :—

Early one morning I was awakened in my bed by a pressure on my hand. It was John Keats, who came to tell me that his brother was no more. I said nothing, and we both remained silent for a while, my hand fast locked in his. At length, my thoughts returning from the dead to the living, I said—“ Have nothing more to do with those lodgings, and alone too ! Had you not better live with me ? ” He paused, pressed my hand warmly, and replied : “ I think it would be better.” From that moment he was my inmate.

John Keats wrote to his brother George and sister-in-law :—

The last days of poor Tom were of the most distressing nature ; but his last moments were not so painful, and his very last was without a pang. My friends have been exceedingly kind to me, every one of them. Brown detained me at his house, and I suppose no one could have had his time made smoother than mine has been. With Dilke and Brown I am quite thick : with Brown, indeed, I am going to domesticate, we shall keep house together. I shall have the front parlour, and he the back one, by which [and here was a felicitous gain for the poet] I shall avoid the noise of Bentley's children, and be the better able to go on with my studies.

In a less serious letter to George, John Keats refers to these junior Bentleys as “ the young carrots,” and to the offensive atmosphere of their mother's industry as one in which he is obliged to “ breathe worsted.”

In the process of removal to Brown's abode, however, he seems to have been much relieved by the kindness of his landlord : among other things we read : “ Bentley brought me a clothes-basket-full of my books to-day.” And with the exception of being the progenitor of uproarious juveniles—the aroma of whose woollen hose hurt those senses born for the breath of field-flowers—the postman proved to the young poet a support in various ways, and is spoken of by him as a friend.

Referring to the period of Keats's life at Hampstead, which now closes, as far as Well Walk is concerned, but which was continued with great interest at Wentworth Place, we may remember that Sir Sidney Colvin said :—

The choice of Hampstead as a place of residence had much to recommend it to Keats : the freshness of the air for the benefit of the invalid Tom, and for his own walks and meditations those beauties of heath, field and wood, interspersed with picturesque embosomed habitations, which his imagination could transmute at will into the landscapes of Arcadia or into those “ with high romances blent ” of an earlier England or of fable-land. For society there was the convenient proximity to, and yet seclusion from, London, together with the immediate neighbourhood of one or two intimate friends. Among these, Keats frequented as familiarly as ever the cottage in the Vale of Health where Leigh Hunt was still living—a kind of self-appointed poet-laureate of Hampstead.

Concerning the writing which Keats had accomplished at Well Walk—in spite of the laundry offence—we see that he composed there the greater part of “ *Endymion*,” though during the process he complains also that “ Mrs. Bentley's children are making a horrid row,” and he longs for Bailey's quiet rooms again at

Oxford. "Endymion," having been begun in the Isle of Wight in the spring of 1817, was published in 1818. The insulting criticisms of it appeared in the autumn of the same year, when Keats, returning from Scotland, was plunged into anxiety concerning his brother, for which reason he found neither time nor inclination to take offence. Indeed, though there was so much pride in his nature, John Keats was entirely free from personal irritability and conceit, and he quickly decided to make no retaliation, indignantly as he would have expressed himself under the same circumstances on behalf of a friend.

Inferior, indeed, as were his writings of the year 1817 to the dignified quality of his matured works a couple of years later, they did not justify nor were they the real cause of that vicious criticism with which they were greeted in the pages of *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *Quarterly Review*, which were envenomed, as has already been intimated, by the personal hatred of the editor, Lockhart, for Leigh Hunt; and hence, after publishing a scurrilous article on that gentleman himself, "the man of many hatreds" sought further to hurt Hunt's feelings by attacking first Keats, and afterwards others of his *protégés*.

So much has been written about the effect, crushing or otherwise, upon the mind and health of John Keats, of this article, that little need be said in an account of him so slight as the present. It is right, however, fully to recognise the calm courage with which this young prophet of Beauty received the blows from

what Landor afterwards called *Blackguard's Magazine*, and to hear what the subject of it himself said, instead of falling into the ancient trap of repeating what a few outsiders thought about him. Writing to his brother and sister-in-law as soon afterwards as the October of the same year—1818—we read :—

There have been letters in my defence in the *Chronicle* and one in the *Examiner*. I think I shall be among the English poets after my death. Even as a matter of present interest the attempt to crush me in the *Quarterly* has only brought me more into notice, and it is a common expression among bookmen—"I wonder that the *Quarterly* should cut its own throat." It does me not the least harm in society to make me appear little and ridiculous.

Also, under the same date, Keats writes :—

Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic on his own works. My own criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what *Blackwood* or the *Quarterly* could possibly inflict, and also when I feel I am right no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary re-perception and ratification of what is fine. . . . The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation, it cannot be matured by law or precept but by sensation and watchfulness in itself. That which is creative must create itself. In "Endymion" I leaped headlong into the sea and therefore have become better acquainted with the soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks than if I had stayed upon the green shore, piped a silly pipe and took tea and comfortable advice. I was never afraid of failure, for I would sooner fail than not be among the greatest.

Among the signs of spirit shown by him when in health we find in another letter the following remark :—

Imaginary grievances have always been more torment than real ones. Real ones will never have any other effect upon me than to stimulate me to get out of or to avoid them.

These are hardly the expressions of a weakling with a tendency to be morbid ! Deprived, however, during the final two years of his life, of the counsel of his brother George : changed from his natural disposition by disease and by the starvation and blood-letting with which the doctors of his day depleted the consumptive patient of the last vestige of strength, this sensitive victim of mental and physical torture very naturally, when the time of his prostration came, might have reviewed this unhappy episode in his life in a much more melancholy mood.

Though no condemnation of Keats's early productions could have been stronger than was that of the late Algernon Swinburne, who spoke of the " rawest and rankest rubbish of his fitful Spring," this great modern poet and critic gives full praise to the " richest fruits of his sudden and splendid summer," adding that the third volume of poems—he refers to those published in 1820—may be placed in the very first rank of poetry : moreover, he mentions " Lamia " and the " Ode to a Nightingale " as the most perfect specimens in the English language.

To illustrate the spontaneity of Keats's compositions we may pick out three examples : first, this perfect Ode, which was completed within three hours with hardly a correction in the manuscript ; second, the " Dedication Sonnet " at the beginning of Keats's first volume of *Miscellaneous Poems*—which was written while the messenger waited, the publisher having sent to say that if a dedication were desired it must be

produced at once, whereupon the young poet left a roomful of company and wrote thus :—

To LEIGH HUNT, Esq.

Glory and loveliness have passed away :

No wreathéd incense do we see upborne
Into the east, to meet the smiling day ;

and third, the well-known lines on Chapman's Homer, which could have taken but an hour in the making. For Cowden Clarke, as in the days at school so now at his rooms at Clerkenwell, had been introducing his friend to some newly discovered treasure, and was absorbed in reading it to him until the early hours of the morning. He bade Keats good-bye, and received from him that sonnet, sent from a distant quarter of London, by breakfast-time the next morning. Clarke's *protégé* had, with amazing development, become able to "pour out noble poetry in lovely form," and the fact that the speed of his work in no way impoverished its quality has been said to prove genius of a very high order.

CHAPTER IX

SOUTH END ROAD
KEATS GROVE

JOHN KEATS AT WENTWORTH PLACE
—NOW NAMED LAWN BANK

SOUTH END ROAD.—Continuing the descent of the East Heath Road we finally come to South End, and here, instead of the group of wooden cottages and the round railed-in pond, which in Keats's time, and for many years afterwards, formed the centre of attraction in this little hamlet, we find the Heath station of the North London Railway; next to this stands the "Railway" Tavern which, to judge by the red-fluted tiles and the aged aspect of the roof, must have existed as a posting house with quite another sign long before railways were heard of or remotely conceived. Indeed, its renaming must have appeared an affectation, a modern method to gain an up-to-date reputation! All that is now left of the pond is the spring of water which caused it and which now yields itself to a public drinking-fountain near the tram terminus. So secluded was Pond Street when John Keats lived in its vicinity, that he mentions, as an event not extraordinary, how "poor Kirkman was there knocked down and robbed of his watch on returning home after dining at Wentworth Place, and he kept his bruises for many days afterwards."

KEATS GROVE—FORMERLY JOHN STREET.—Before arriving, however, at the bottom of South End Road,



SITE OF HAMPSTEAD HEATH STATION SOUTH END ROAD (House beyond still standing)
(From an old Colour Print)



we may turn off on our right hand, rejoicing to see that in the midst of a mass of modern shops and houses, which rend the heart of the antiquarian, Keats Grove, with its "leafy luxury," as he called it, and its semi-rural dwellings, still remains and particularly that Lawn Bank on the south side of this shady road bears a brown-red medallion, erected as late as 1896, recording the name of John Keats.

LAWN BANK.—We may well believe that the house standing back in the quiet garden surrounded by meadow-land, where the poet of Beauty sat beside the mulberry tree to write his "Ode to the Nightingale," was very differently situated early in the nineteenth century from what it is to-day. Bricks and mortar were unseen on Parliament Hill or on South Hill Park, and the neighbourhood, purely verdant, was such that any peace-loving nightingale could approve. It is possible that at some time the bird's sweet notes had fallen on the ear of the poet as he lay depressed by the weakness of his ill-health, between sleeping and waking, and that its nocturnal music had merged into a beautiful dream. Stopford Brooke, in that unique lecture of his, said : "Keats and the nightingale are one ; it is his soul that sings in the bird, and his music that passes away over the hill."

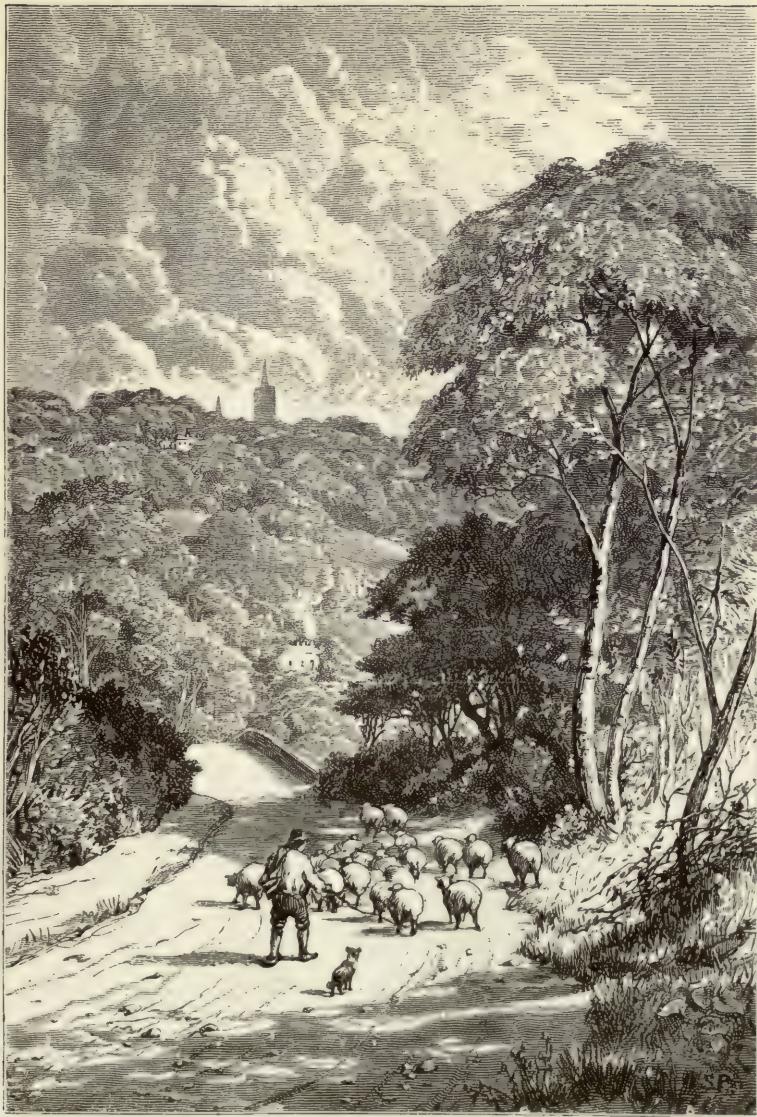
Adieu ! adieu ! Thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side ; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades :
Was it a vision, or a waking dream ?
Fled is that music—Do I wake or sleep ?

Fled are also the near meadow and the still stream—the latter was probably the little river Fleet covered now by paved paths and houses, choked out of existence by civilisation. Keats first repeated his lines on the nightingale to his friend Haydon, the painter, as he strolled with him in the Kilburn meadows. It was at Lawn Bank that the poet wrote all but one of his famous odes, of which Swinburne says :—

Highest among the genuine credentials of his fame we must rate his unequalled and unrivalled Odes. Of these perhaps the two nearest to absolute perfection are "Autumn" and that on a "Grecian Urn." Radiant, fervent and musical is the "Ode to a Nightingale," one of the finest masterpieces of human work in all time and in all ages.

WENTWORTH PLACE.—Lawn Bank consisted in Keats's day of two small houses attached, which had been built and were inhabited respectively by two friends who wished to live near to each other. These friends were introduced to Keats by John Hamilton Reynolds, one of the congenial literary companions first met by the poet at Hunt Cottage. The dwellings called Wentworth Place, thus originally standing in one large garden at the foot of the Heath, did not assume their present form until some years later when Miss Chester, an actress of some eminence and private reader to King George IV., bought them, made some structural alterations and converted them into a single dwelling, at the same time re-naming the property Lawn Bank.¹

¹ A small extension of the little houses called Wentworth Place was made at another period, but this has now given its site to the modern "Wentworth Mansions."



HAMPSTEAD FROM THE KILBURN MEADOWS



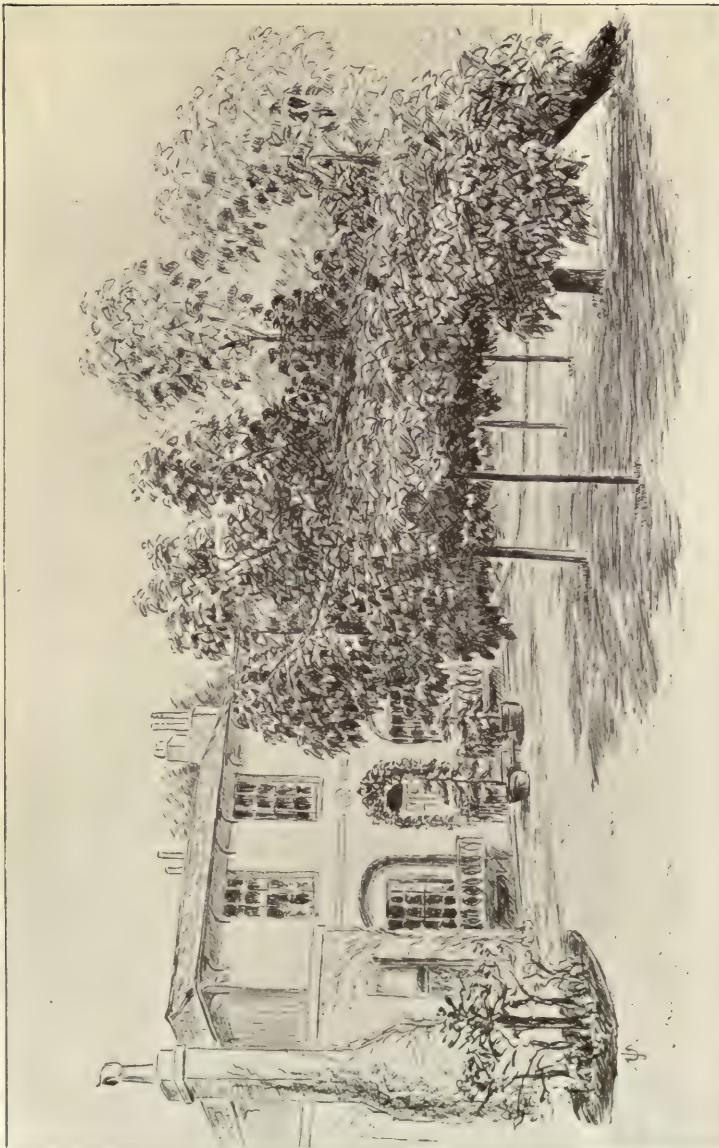
One of the occupants of this intimate enclosure, before it was thus unified and had assumed its name of Lawn Bank, was Keats's friend, Charles Armitage Brown, a Radical of literary tastes, one who shared the poet's principles, admired his writings, and, long before the day of Tom Keats's death, had wished for John's daily companionship. Armitage Brown was nine years older than Keats, and had already abandoned a short business career in Russia, after which he devoted himself to writing plays: one of these, founded on his knowledge of the country he had lately left, pleased the audiences at the Lyceum Theatre and brought him £500. Many of Brown's literary works came out in the *Examiner* and in various of Hunt's other publications.

The resident who owned the larger and more westerly portion of Wentworth Place was Charles Wentworth Dilke, the accomplished critic, journalist and antiquarian who afterwards became editor and part-proprietor—with his brother—of the *Athenæum*. Dilke was about twenty-nine years of age when Keats used to meet him at Hampstead; he had married young and had built for himself this cosy home some two years before the poet left Well Walk and came to live with Armitage Brown, next door to him.

In a letter to George Keats, dated Wentworth Place, February 24, 1819, John says: "Brown and Dilke are walking round their garden, hands in pockets, making observations. . . . Brown and Dilke are very kind and considerate towards me. . . ." Also, "We lead

very quiet lives here ; Dilke is at present in Greek history and antiquities." These neighbours called themselves the Wentworthians, and enjoyed an intimacy not only literary, but social and hilarious, for Armitage Brown, outside of his Scotch caution, was a lively and humorous man. The farcical letter to Mr. and Mrs. Dilke, in which Keats and Brown collaborated, respectively in red and black ink, is a duet of personal gibes upon each other and a wild but obviously open hoax upon Dilke himself. Among their more serious works of joint authorship was the dramatic tragedy "Otho the Great," of which Brown supplied the plot, and Keats wrote the dialogues. This play was accepted at Drury Lane, and the hero's part was chosen, as the writers hoped it would be, by Kean ; but the manager's delay in producing it was such that Keats and Brown removed the manuscript and presented it to Covent Garden, where Macready was then playing the principal parts.

The intimacy of Keats with Dilke became very close, and we may attribute to this ancestral friendship the fact of the late Charles Wentworth Dilke of the third generation—M.P. and baronet—possessing so many memorials and interesting relics of the poet. These were recently left at Chelsea at the time of his death. Although it has been considered that these treasures might appropriately be added to the collection in the British Museum, we rejoice that they are now safely deposited in the Central Library, Finchley Road, Hampstead : for the will of the donor consigned them



LAWN BANK, KEAT'S GROVE



to the care of the Libraries Committee of this parish—the parish in which Keats was encouraged to embrace his profession, where he wrote the majority of his poems, experienced many of his most marked friendships—including his love for Fanny Brawne—and where he spent the most eventful, as also the latest, years of his life.

Keats enjoyed at Wentworth Place with Brown a very comfortable companionship, and writes that he “likes his society as well as any man’s.” There is little doubt that among the poet’s friends it was Bailey—the theological undergraduate—to whom the poet expressed his most serious thoughts. Although Keats alternated in his opinion on the subject of immortality, and never professed any belief or disbelief in the Christian Faith, he respected it in his friend. It does not appear in the poet’s “Life” or letters that he was happy in his acquaintance with the clergy. He remarked to one of his intimates: “I begin to hate parsons,” and he certainly went on to describe those whom he had met—not excepting the then vicar of Hampstead—in most irreverent, though humorous terms. It was perhaps unfortunate for Keats that Bailey’s first curacy lay as far off as Carlisle. Later he became Archdeacon of Colombo. Brown, on the contrary, remained in Hampstead as Keats’s companion, and, with his combination of a literary and robust temperament, made a useful substitute for the poet’s loss of his brother George across the Atlantic. Brown contributed the necessary sunshine to Keats’s life:

moreover, he admired and believed in Keats's high genius, and, in spite of professing to be a poet on his own account, he was ever ready to laud and magnify his neighbour: indeed, he was genuinely desirous of becoming his biographer. To this end he collected material for twenty years subsequent to Keats's death, but, after he went to settle in New Zealand, gave over the task, together with all the matter he had amassed, to young Monckton Milnes—Lord Houghton—a transaction which resulted in the first and well-known "Life of John Keats."¹

From Wentworth Place, in December, 1819, a year after his removal hither, Keats writes to his sister: "Mr. Brown and I go on in our dog-trot of breakfast, dinner, supper, sleep, confab, stirring the fire, and reading": and to another friend: "Brown is writing 'David,' from which he reads little bits aloud to me, stuffing my young infidel mouth with food." Also: "Brown is writing about the devil this morning, to whom he does not do full justice, and I tell him this is not right, considering this personage is the muse who inspires his poetry." The devoted Brown used to copy Keats's rough manuscripts for him, and he spoke of the facility with which those lines were composed, as they sat together at the table; of the necessity also of having a friend at hand to gather his treasures, written at odd times.

When once he had expressed his soul in poetry,

¹ Brown's acquaintance with Lord Houghton was made in 1832 at the villa of Walter Savage Landor at Fiesole, for Armitage Brown went to live in Italy after the sad death of his companion.

Keats cared nothing further for his compositions, but said about himself: "I feel assured that I should write from the mere yearning and fondness I have for the Beautiful, even if my night's labours should be burnt every morning, and no eye ever rest upon them." Concerning the nightingale "who built her nest in our garden," Brown writes:—

Keats felt a tranquillity and continual joy in her song: and one morning he took his chair from the breakfast table to the grass-plot, where he sat for two or three hours. When he came into the house, I perceived that he had some scraps of paper in his hand, and these he was quietly thrusting behind the books. On enquiring, I found these scraps—four or five in number—contained his poetic feeling about our nightingale. The writing was not well legible: and it was difficult to arrange the stanzas . . . immediately afterwards I searched for more of his fugitive pieces. From that day he gave me permission to copy any verses he might write, and I fully availed myself of it. He cared so little for them himself when once his imagination was released from their influence.

Neither was it the odd scraps of paper alone which Brown preserved for the public. There was a time when poetry as a vocation for Keats seemed in danger of being abandoned, for though Lockhart had failed to deprecate his writings in the minds of those who were able to judge, there still remained that vast majority of people who possessed no minds and who refused to admire or to purchase that which they had been instructed to despise. Writing at this distance of time since the publication of those volleys upon Hunt's followers, Keats says:—

I was in hope that as people saw, as they must do, all the trickery and iniquity of these plagues, they would scout them; but no, they

are like the spectators at the Westminster cockpit, they only want to see the battle, they do not care who wins or who loses.

In spite of his healthy-minded independence there was a practical side to this subject. "What use," he exclaims, "to write poems to be kept in store and to get fly-blown at the publishers?" The non-purchasing public were beginning to matter! For Keats's private means were used very largely in loans to his friends, to whom he never refused, and from whom he never requested, money. The £200 employed in this way at the moment would have been useful for necessaries for himself; but Haydon, his debtor and intimate friend, took no notice of a delicate intimation to this effect: Keats's grandmotherly legacy ought to have been useful at this time: but it remained still in the grasp of the guardian. Mr. Abbey had, indeed, at this time offered John Keats "the brokerage of his tea-business," but that cantankerous old gentleman conducted the preliminary interviews in such a way as to spoil the proposal which Keats appears, in writing to his sister, not altogether unwilling to accept. He also wrote to her: "Mr. Brown has been my great friend for some time: without him I should perhaps have been in personal distress." Our poet now bethought himself of medical practice, for which his qualifications had been previously completed, and his thoughts turned to Edinburgh, until Brown, with his faithful admiration of Keats, came to the rescue with money and persuasion, and indeed put his veto upon such a plan—thus, perhaps, preserving the poet to posterity.

Sir Sidney Colvin tells us concerning Keats's third winter in London—viz., the year 1818—that he had now become intimate in the best literary circles. “ The power and charm of genius were already visibly upon him.” Also a friend at that time said of Keats :—

The character and expression of his features would arrest the most casual passenger in the street : a small, handsome, ardent-looking youth—his shoulders very broad for his height, his figure compact and well turned, with the neck thrust eagerly forward, carrying a strong, shapely head : thick clustering gold-brown hair, features powerful, finished, mobile . . . mouth at once combative and sensitive in the extreme . . . eyes hazel-brown, flashing, visibly inspired. Keats looked conscious of a high calling.

It was said also of his conversation that “ as long as health and spirits lasted he was often full of pleasantry and nonsense, but his wit was essentially amiable ; he was far too tender-hearted ever to be a satirist.” Severn said, “ He never spoke of anyone but by saying something in their favour, and this always so agreeably and cleverly . . . to increase your favourable impression of the person he was speaking of.” Cowden Clarke said concerning his old schoolfellow that “ had he been born in squalor he would have emerged a gentleman.”

Such, then, is some slight impression of this highly endowed youth at the age of twenty-three ; and it was at that time that Keats first met the maiden who, though innocently, was an acute disturber of the peace.

FANNY BRAWNE.—Mrs. Brawne, the mother of the

apparently insufficient young Fanny, was the widow of a Samuel Brawne, and had lately come to live in Downshire Hill, where she had become acquainted with the Wentworth Dilkes ; this widow-lady possessed comfortable means and three children, of whom Fanny —aged eighteen—was the eldest. It was at a party at Mr. Dilke's house, when Keats was still living in Well Walk, that he was first introduced to Miss Brawne. Although at first he felt distinctly critical and dissatisfied with her—as he was with most of the ladies he knew, a fact which may be attributable to his abnormally high ideal of women—he became within a week wholly possessed by her personality and her presence, and in a short time loved her with an intensity of attachment which became something in the nature of a disaster rather than an unalloyed delight. Fanny Brawne, with her pale hair, grey-blue eyes, pointed nose and retiring forehead, may possibly have been superficial in feeling, when compared with the complex nature of the poet's high soul, of which she appeared to understand but little. Yet such as she had, she seems to have given him of her best with a robust good will.

It is not every Browning who finds a Barrett, nor was it necessarily owing to shortcomings in Miss Brawne, but largely due, no doubt, to the misfortune of Keats's health and a psychological something in himself that his love brought him more pain than happiness. Also, the emotional love was of necessity more wearing to his nervous system than had been the many mental and fraternal companionships of his previous years, which

had added no sorrow to them. In Keats's younger days, even at school, there had existed in him a slight strain of suspicion and self-torturing melancholy. As long as his brothers had remained near his path, these difficult elements in John's disposition were, as we have seen, easily smoothed away. Especially did the possibilities of disquietude increase when disease began to overwhelm all his feelings and even to undermine his will-power: the somewhat suspicious vein in him preyed upon his weak and fevered state to torture point. The separation from, instead of the more consoling possession of, his treasure was thus forced upon him. The sufferer himself was in the narrowing prison-walls of pain while she was experiencing that easy freedom of a Philistine insensibility. Indeed, as Keats had once written to a friend, he now felt too truly:—

Honest Jack Health, true Jack Health,
Banish Health and banish all the world.

Entirely unable to breathe the evening air, or to accompany Miss Brawne to the dances and other entertainments in which her young energy delighted, he feared in his heightened apprehension that she might be drawn away from the love of him, and this induced an agony of suffering which was seriously harmful to his fevered consumptive state. We have only to read those emotional and often most distressing letters of his to the girl—letters which Mr. Buxton Forman, after serious consideration, thought well to publish—to feel how much this passionately attached and hyper-sensitive lover endured by the somewhat elusive

character of her attitude towards him. He would at one time implore her to remain at home, and at another would assure her with repentance, "I will be as patient in illness and as believing in love as I am able"—for the pride of Fanny Brawne resented these requests as offensive. Under his peculiar difficulties Keats, obviously, would have gone through his last stages of lingering life and death less distractedly without having known her : the hopeless outlook upon their union was devastating to his strength, and in itself a disaster.

It was in the year 1819, when Mr. and Mrs. Dilke went to live at Westminster for the education of their son Charles as a day-boy at the school, that Mrs. Brawne and her family came to be close neighbours to Keats and Armitage Brown, for that lady now rented the house which the Dilkes had vacated. After this removal Keats or his letters would daily be in and out of the Brawnes' house, as the Brawnes also of his.

In the January of the following year, 1820, George Keats, to obtain some money due to him from the family trustee, made his only visit to England since his departure, and the two brothers met with the same old affection for each other ; but John, who was guarding his love for his lady with reserve and tender reverence, failed for the first time in his life to give this brother his confidence in the thing which most occupied his heart, so that George, like the intimate and affectionate friend Joseph Severn, barely knew until the poet's death that there had been any betrothal between himself and Miss Brawne. The brother's absence from

Kentucky was necessarily a short one and terminated on January 28.

It was only a few days after this parting that John's first serious illness began : and on this wise. He arrived home at eleven o'clock on the evening of February 3, alarming Armitage Brown not a little by his feverish and excited condition, saying, when at last he was able to speak, that he had taken a chill in the bitterly cold weather on the outside of the coach. No doubt the remembrance of Tom's experience with its fatal termination fourteen months before, and the knowledge of inherited tendency from their mother—together with Keats's own medical knowledge—assured him in the suspicion of his symptoms. Brown afterwards wrote describing his friend's return :—

He mildly and instantly yielded to my request that he should go to bed . . . and I followed with the best immediate remedy in my power. On entering the cold sheets he slightly coughed and I heard him say, "That is blood from my mouth . . . Bring me the candle, Brown"; he looked up into my face with a calmness of countenance I can never forget and said, "The colour of that blood is arterial. I cannot be deceived in that colour. . . . That drop is my death-warrant ; I must die." I ran for a surgeon. My friend was bled and at five in the morning I left him after he had been some time in a quiet sleep.

Under these circumstances and with the effective help of the doctor's blood-letting and starvation treatment Keats's sensitive, nervous condition remained exceedingly reduced. For three weeks Brown nursed him with assiduous devotion night and day ; after the first week of this period the invalid was able to receive

short visits of a few moments' duration from Fanny Brawne, between whom and himself notes were constantly exchanged, being sent by hand between the adjoining houses. He felt in the face of this serious state of ill-health that honour compelled him to offer Miss Brawne her liberty respecting their betrothal, which had been made with the knowledge of her mother; and he was much calmed and strengthened by her refusal of this painful but necessary suggestion.

Throughout the whole period of his residence at Wentworth Place, during the heavy trial of his increasing disease and the consequent hopelessness of his profound attachment to his Beatrice, this young Dante suffered no decline in intellect or spirit, but rather he rose to his greatest poetic height, writing by far the largest number of his best poems. He made rapid developments of mind and soul, beginning now to see outside of his own peculiar province of Beauty, and desiring to be able to deal with the problem of mankind in its human sorrow—which problem was rendered difficult by his weak health and his idealistic temperament: in short, it was unsuitable to his poetic capacity. Having dwelt upon the peculiar delights of Beauty and Nature, he wrote:—

And can I ever bid these joys farewell?
Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life
Where I may find the agonies, the strife
Of human hearts.

Also, in the re-modelling of "Hyperion," the

speaker, who is supposed to represent the poet himself, says :—

“ High prophetess,” said I, “ purge off,
Benign, if so it please thee, my mind’s film.”
“ None can usurp this height,” returned the Shade,
“ But those to whom the miseries of the world
Are misery, and will not let them rest.”

It is, indeed, a question for literary treatment, rather than for the present somewhat topographical history, whether this high priest of Beauty, of Nature, and of classical Romance would, in attempting a harder human question, have destroyed the sweet scents of his own sacrifices, although his conviction that he ought to undertake that work makes us admire and love him the more : for here we see his humility and those cherished serious thoughts for the race which, in his short life, never came to full fruition. Another instance of the world’s pain having pierced the soul of the young poet is found in the “ Ode to a Nightingale,” where he speaks of

The weariness, the fever and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan.

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow.

In “ Sleep and Poetry,” Keats had long ago written—
though with a less serious sense of responsibility :—

O, for ten years that I may overwhelm
Myself in poesy ! So I may do the deed
That my own soul has to itself decreed.

But that coveted ten years was not granted ! Had it been—none may say what the continued development

of his gifts might have effected, probably raising him to a position without equal in the history of literature.

Since the death of his brother at the close of the year 1818 Keats, as we have seen, had continued to write with inspiration as great as his industry, through changing health and circumstances ; thus in the first week of July, 1820, he was able to publish a new volume consisting of the following poems : first, "Isabella, or the Pot of Basil," of which the opening verses had been composed in Well Walk, the piece being continued when he went to Teignmouth to take charge of the invalid Tom. Lovers of that romantic part of Devon like to remember that Haldon Moor, during this visit, was sometimes used by John Keats as his workshop, and though the story of "Isabella," taken from Boccaccio, with its mediæval Italian surroundings, would not be appropriately illustrated by this Devonshire scenery, that was a kind of disparity in which our poet allowed himself liberty in many instances. In any case the vast elevation and fine solitude of the landscape must have made a magnificent quiet for the concentration of his thoughts. Second, the new volume included "Lamia," the Greek-like poem which contains finely-observed colour descriptions. This had been begun at Shanklin in June, 1819. Third, the "Eve of St. Agnes," with its mediæval romantic story, and fine representations of scenery. Fourth, the long, but unfinished Grecian poem, "Hyperion," so greatly admired by Shelley, which was re-written by Keats in a more serious strain

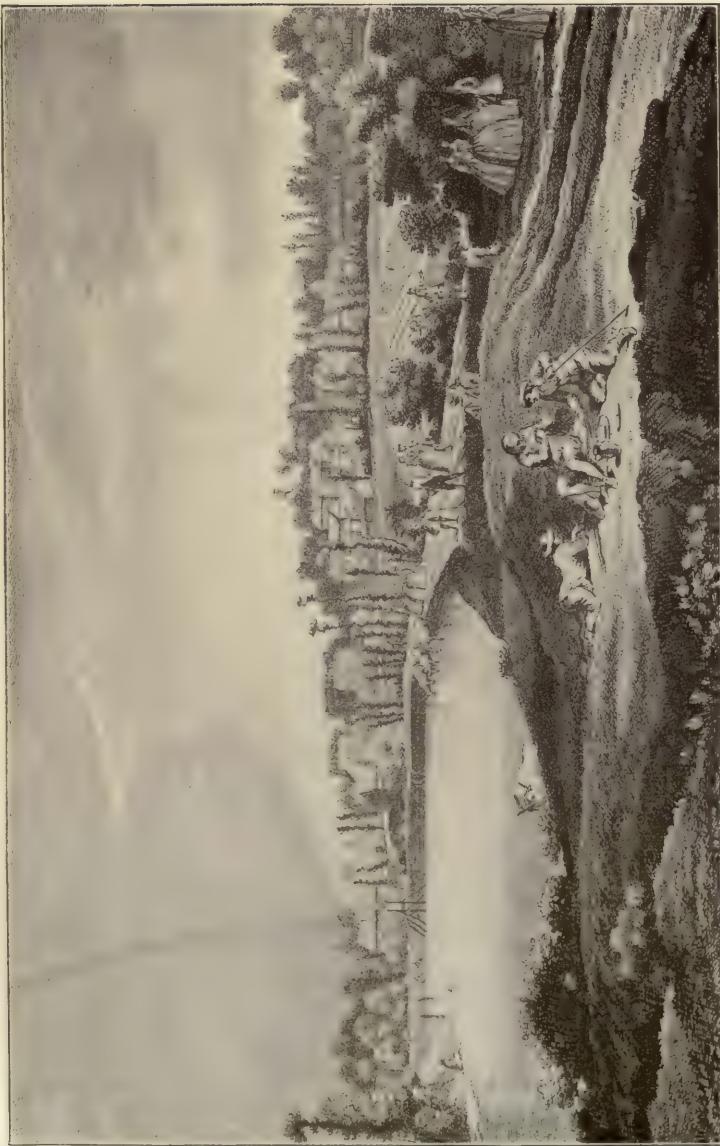
subsequent to the development of the new thoughts in him which we have already considered: this was begun by the bedside of his sick brother during the last months in Well Walk, and finished at Wentworth Place. Lastly, the new volume contained the famous Odes, most of which were composed while living with Armitage Brown in the spring of 1819. These Odes were of themselves sufficient, says a great critic, to confer a high poetic reputation. There were the "Grecian Urn," "Psyche," the "Nightingale" (which was first published in the *Annals of the Fine Arts*, in July, 1819, edited by James Elmes), the "Ode to Melancholy," and, lastly, the "Ode on Autumn," written six months later, having been conceived in September of the same year during his visit to Winchester:—

Where are the songs of Spring? Aye, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too. . . .

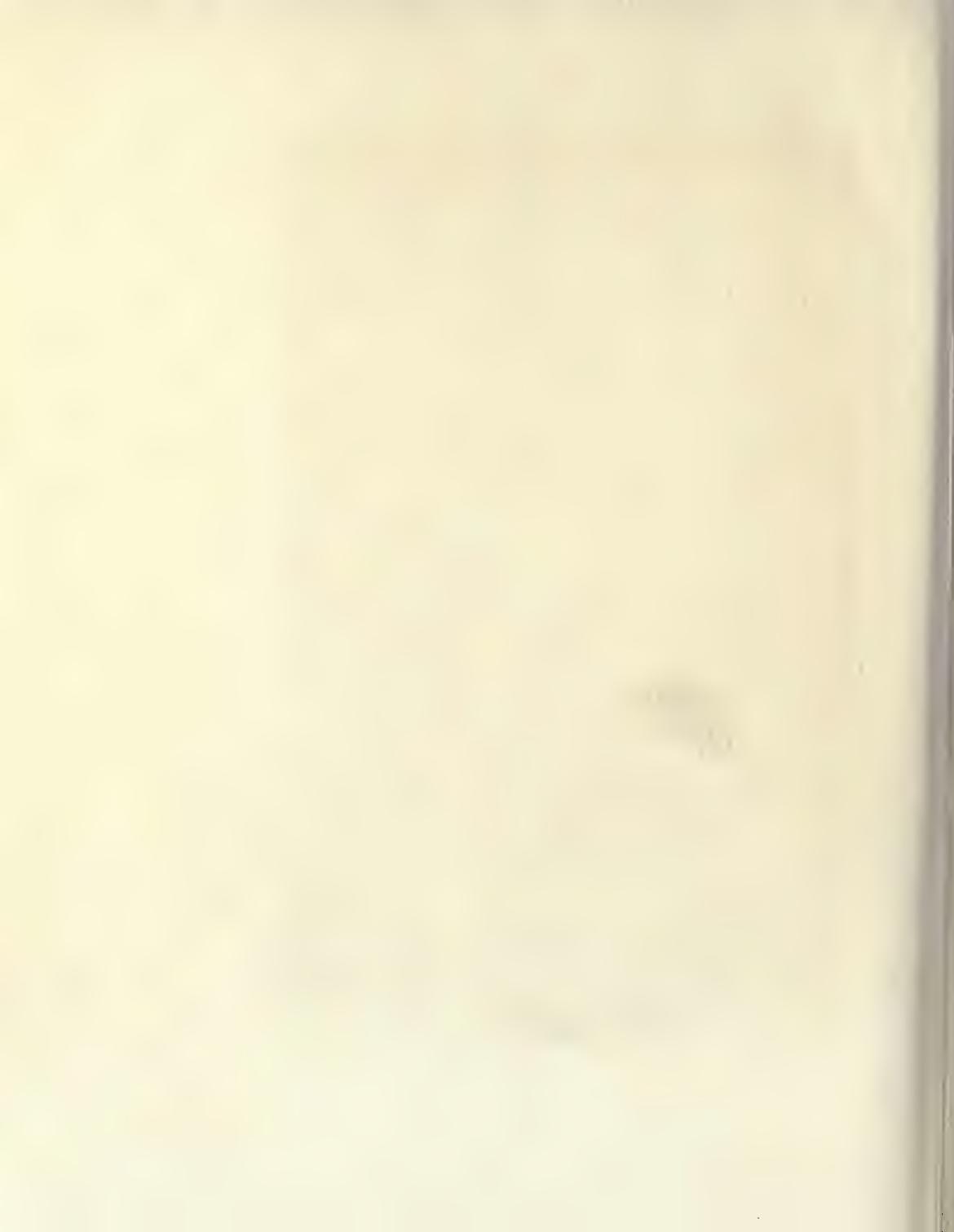
Also, during this period of Keats's life—from January, 1819, to August, 1820—we have "La Belle Dame sans Merci," a ballad-like piece which he calls a ditty, and which is of a fanciful mediæval nature, founded on a Provençal romance: this poem came out in Leigh Hunt's *Indicator* for May, 1820. In addition to this volume there was the unfinished "Cap and Bells," some stanzas of which were also published in the *Indicator*—Keats's favourite journal.

Concerning the "Lamia" volume, as it is often called, the *Edinburgh Review* was favourable and

gracious: and Leigh Hunt put into the *Indicator* for August an excellent article of commendation. Keats now wrote to Brown, who was in Scotland at the time: " My book has had good success among literary people, and I believe has a moderate sale." The last impression of his poetry, therefore, a month before he sailed for Italy, was distinctly cheering, and would not induce any of that supposed melancholia on his sick-bed of which so much importance has been made respecting his broken-hearted sense of failure. True, he was ill and dejected enough in this August of 1820, and after Brown's departure for Scotland, when he had gone as far as Gravesend with his friend in the smack, Keats returned home, not to his old quarters, but to some lodgings which he had taken in the still semi-verdant neighbourhood of Kentish Town, with the object of being near to Leigh Hunt, who had now left the Vale of Health for the convenience of an easier access to London. Leigh Hunt and his wife lived at Mortimer Terrace and, finding that Keats in his neighbouring lodgings was excessively weak and low, they insisted that he should remove into their house. Here they did all that kindness could do for their fevered and suffering friend, who, however, could not be comforted, but only gazed from a window towards Hampstead throughout the length of each day. During this difficult time Hunt took him to drive on the Heath; on which occasion they left the carriage and rested once again on Keats's favourite old seat at the end of Well Walk: and here, after the many alternations of splendid courage and



SOUTH END—POND ON THE SITE OF PRESENT NORTH LONDON STATION
(From an Engraving by Chatelain, 1745)



inevitable depression with which he had fought his misfortunes for months, Keats, now completely overcome, burst into tears by Hunt's side, declaring to his friend that his heart was nigh broken.

Writing frequently to Fanny Brawne during this visit, and hearing from her, though not wholly to his comfort, for he was now exceedingly ill, and she going much into society—or so it seemed to the prisoner—he returned on August 12 to his own home at Wentworth Place and here, through Mrs. Brawne's kindness, was not allowed to remain in the desolate quarters of Armitage Brown's empty house, but was comfortably received into the close-neighbouring family circle—Mrs. Brawne's own house adjoining.

While he lay in bed here very ill, his friend Haydon came to see him and painted the well-known portrait of him. The artist afterwards described to a friend in high-flown language—for whatever this man did must be done sensationaly—the surroundings of the bedroom which showed up the colour on the patient's face: “In a white bed, with a book, hectic and on his back,” etc. The self-admiring painter explains with inflated egoism how his superiority and good advice had no effect on Keats's fretful condition, how impossible it was to quieten the sufferer and how he, the calm and righteous, went away “deeply affected.” Yet this was the man who—theatrical to the last—committed suicide because the world failed to appreciate his somewhat questionable genius! Pity was that poor Keats, at last a little more comfortable in his environ-

ment, should have been allowed to be tortured by such a visitor ! But the poet was ever ready to be blind to his bombast and boasting, though he often had reason to suffer from these and other of Haydon's faults, some instances of which had caused him to write to his brother George Keats : " I find it best first to learn all the faults of my friends and afterwards to remain passive concerning them." Hence, instead of allowing himself to be surfeited by the self-praise of the painter, the poet had long ago written that generous sonnet in his honour, beginning :—

High-mindedness, a jealousy for good.

In the last autumn of his life, we see, then, that John Keats was nursed in the home of his beloved by her and her mother : and here it would seem that the sufferer should have been allowed to remain, for the end, clearly inevitable, would have been reached with far less distress. The banishment to Italy, prescribed by his doctor, to prolong by a little the doomed life, presented itself to the patient as a positive dread ; the thought of separation from his friends, and above all from that one whose presence he so painfully craved, would indeed awake him in the morning and prey on his mind the whole day.

Shelley, in the north of Italy, now hearing of the state of his friend's health, writes to him at once ; and Keats, communicating with Brown, still away in Scotland, says, " I received a letter from Shelley at Pisa, of a very kind nature, asking me to pass the

winter with him." It was either in this or another letter to Brown, that Keats requests his companionship for the journey; on receiving no reply, he deferred any further arrangements, knowing well that his letter could not have reached its destination. Brown, indeed, travelling from one place to another, missing his communications in the days of coach-mails, remained ignorant of the alarming increase of bad symptoms at Hampstead, or of the proposals which were now being pressed upon Keats to leave England. The autumn threatened, the doctor urged the necessity of an early date, and the departure was settled to take place—for Rome—by sea to Naples; not, as Shelley had suggested, *via* Leghorn to Pisa; for, in the disappointment of Brown's non-appearance, there uprose a painter-companion who could make use of the opportunity of going to Italy to study art in Rome. Among Keats's many kind friends it was Joseph Severn who rushed to the rescue, anxious to help and protect him. Hence two berths were taken on the sailing vessel *Maria Crowther*, bound for Naples on September 18.

Persevering young Severn, who, under the paternal disapproval of a painting career, had been forced of necessity to sell books and watch to buy himself brushes and canvas before he could produce the historic picture which won the Academy's prize, having thus justified his choice of a profession, must offend his father again by despising distinction now it had come! Severn, senior, on hearing his son's suggestion of going abroad with the dying poet, stared at the wild proposal

and, after a father's gentle fashion of that day, knocked the proposer down. The quality of the stone and the steel upon which he set his son to engrave must have entered the soul of James Severn !

Mr. Taylor, Keats's good and friendly publisher, to help the sad state of affairs, now bought from the poet the copyright of "*Endymion*," paying him for it £100, and was present among a few intimate friends to see him off at Gravesend. Nor is it conceivable how the journey in those days of discomfort in travel could have been accomplished, alone, by an invalid in the condition in which Keats now found himself, had it not been for the support of his friend. As it was, he suffered much weakness from hunger in the immense drive from Naples to Rome. Moreover, a hundred years ago Italians were hostile to strangers, superstitious and unsympathetic to any sort of affliction. But Joseph Severn, though he was just beginning to feel his feet in his profession, and full of artistic honours, gladly left the new and pleasing sounds of success in London, for the feverishness and depression of the broken-hearted poet in Rome.

Armitage Brown, having at length received Keats's letter in the Highlands, started south and sailed in haste from Dundee, arriving in the Thames on the evening of September 17, and before landing was lying-to for the same night during which Keats was also sleeping in harbour ready to sail on the morning of the 18th. Nor was this the only provoking mischance of its kind ; for, meeting a storm in the Channel, Keats

and Severn were driven into Portsmouth, where they landed and went as far as Bedhampton to visit Mrs. Snook—Mr. Dilke's married sister. Returning to his ship the same night Keats wrote a long and deeply confidential letter to Brown, which was intended to find him on his return home from Scotland; whereas Brown spent the whole of that same day with Mr. Dilke's father at Chichester, ten miles only from the house at which Keats was visiting Mr. Dilke's sister! The travellers bound for Naples landed once again, by reason of bad weather, on the coast of Dorsetshire, and here the distressed mind of the invalid poet was calmed and made glad by roaming on the sea-shore. After this ramble he wrote the lines which, in spite of many subsequent ebbs and flows of his strength, proved to be the last in his life :

Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art,
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of cold ablation round earth's human shores. . . .

Meanwhile Shelley, who had yet heard nothing from Wentworth Place, wrote to Leigh Hunt, asking :—

Where is Keats now? I am anxiously expecting him in Italy, when I shall take care to bestow every possible attention on him. I consider his a most valuable life, and I am deeply interested in his safety. I intend to be the physician both of his body and his soul, to keep the one warm and to teach the other Greek.

Shelley's letter to Hunt contained also the following

characteristically generous and gracious remarks concerning the sick poet : " I am aware, indeed, that I am nourishing a rival who will far surpass me, and this is an additional motive and will be an added pleasure."

The rival, was, truly, being nourished to the best of man's ability in Rome, where Dr. Clark—afterwards Sir James Clark, Court physician—had taken rooms for the patient opposite his own dwelling in the Piazza di Spagna, and was there prepared to give him, gratuitously, of his best, as was Clark's ready custom in the case of professional and intellectual men. A valuable friend and medical attendant he proved in this case, and Mrs. Clark also was full of kind actions. As to Severn's resourceful invention, to his care and great patience during his six months' night and day nursing probably no parallel exists ; no duty was too menial for the invalid's sake, he swept the floor of the bedroom to save noise and intrusion—every action was one of intelligence and love. The house in which he thus devoted himself is easily visited now by pilgrims, having been bought in 1908 by the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, and is found at the foot of the Scala di Spagna, 26 on the right side ascending to Santa Trinità de' Monti. As we stand, modern tourists, in that room where the relics and manuscripts are shown, let us get rid of our Roman guide and of the past ninety-two years, the better to visualise that short, wasted figure and powerful face which has not yet lost its flash of illumination at times—John Keats's young indignation could still return when required !

The dinner has been sent in from the neighbouring *trattoria*, uneatable as usual ! It was only for the two English heretics, who cares ? Keats cares ! And, in the absence of an Italian tongue to convince the cook with, he uncovers and empties all the dishes out of window ! The substitution of deeds for words was effectual, and the foreigners' food was improved ! The invalid must write no poetry nor see any pictures or ruins : but he will not allow Severn to be deprived, and contentedly takes walks with another Englishman patient on the Pincio in the clear sun around the Borghese Gardens ; he listens to music in his own sitting-room, for Severn, who knew it was his best soother of pain, hired a piano and played Haydn's sonatas. Keats was amusing, and sometimes so lively that letters were sent to England giving hope of his eventual recovery.

But afterwards came December 10, when everything changed acutely for the worse ! Keats, with his medical knowledge, saw accurately what must be the sequel with all its unlovely details, and now painfully entreated—not for the sake of his own prospective suffering, but of the toil and sacrifice which it was inevitable that that suffering must bring to his companion—to be allowed to make use of the laudanum he had previously given into that friend's safe keeping. His companion's steady refusal to the increasingly urgent and even angry demands, in return for which he received unique and untiring affection, in time soothed the sufferer : Keats learned now, moreover, whence Severn obtained that moral strength, and he, too, began to believe in

the Source, asking the artist frequently to read Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying." And now with an established belief in a future life, he longed more and more for release and for the quiet grave. "When will this posthumous existence of mine come to an end, doctor?" he constantly inquired of Dr. James Clark. The poet could now already "feel the flowers growing in the ground over his head"; the shape and colour of each that he had known throughout his life were present to him now. "His generous concern for me," Severn said, "in my isolated position in Rome, was one of his greatest cares." And throughout the remainder of his long life Joseph Severn recalls the words and events of these months. Five days before Keats's death his faithful protector wrote:—

Poor Keats has me ever by him, and shadows out the form of one solitary friend; he opens his eyes in great doubt and horror, but when they fall upon me they close gently, open quietly and close again, till he falls asleep. This thought alone would keep me by him till he dies.

Severn drew one of his many portraits of the patient "at three o'clock in the morning, to keep myself awake," and sent this sketch to Miss Sabina Novello, the sister of Mary Novello, who was married to Charles Cowden Clarke.¹

On February 23, a year and three weeks after that home-coming at Wentworth Place, when John Keats

¹ Cowden Clarke became a partner in the Novello publishing firm, on retiring from which he devoted his time exclusively to literature, living first at Nice, and afterwards at Genoa, where he died in 1877, at ninety years of age.

had so calmly told Brown "That drop is my death-warrant"—he said now, "Severn, I—lift me up—I am dying—I shall die easy; don't be frightened, be firm and thank God it has come." "He gradually sank into death so quiet that I thought he still slept," recounted his friend, whose last act of tenderness was to lay the tired, tortured body beneath the flowers, which, in imagination, had already been growing above him:

By no suggestion can the stranger tell to whom this nameless grave belongs, except that upon Severn's, which so long afterwards adjoined it, the artist is there described as "The friend of the young English poet John Keats"; for here, in the Protestant cemetery at Rome, after the interval of fifty-eight years, Severn was laid by his side.¹ These twin graves, within the same small enclosure, are visited every day by English and Americans, who read the inscription bearing a name on the stone of Joseph Severn, Artist and British Consul; and the self-chosen inscription, but with no name on the stone, of the "Young English poet whose name is writ in water." Severn assured Keats's friends that this sad epitaph was requested in quietness of soul, with no bitterness of spirit. Sufficiently crushed, no doubt, though the victim might be with the wasting of his disease, his love separation and the sense of his poetic powers cut off, we can trace no

¹ Severn continued his artistic career in Rome after Keats died. In 1828 he married the daughter of Lord Montgomerie. Coming to England with his wife in 1840 to educate their children, three of whom became artists, he returned in 1860 as British Consul to Rome, where he died in 1879

painful remembrance on his part of the literary critic concerning his early volume of poems. By Mr. Buxton Forman's publication of the whole of Keats's correspondence and the "Lives" of him which have been written, readers who are willing may fairly disprove the fallacy that Keats was killed by his critics. The industrious study expended upon his thoughts and character as well as on his poems, during the past ninety-two years, has given to the modern student more material, and a better focus of mind on the subject, than his contemporaries could possibly have possessed.

Noble-hearted Shelley, full of admiration and compassion for his brother poet, was nevertheless little acquainted with that poet's daily life, and was never intimate with his character: for John Keats was proud, and in this case reserved, unnecessarily conscious of his inferior birth as compared with that of the baronet's son, whose family had been lords of their land between four and five hundred years.¹ Shelley had always desired Keats's confidence, and had been ready with useful and unassuming advice—indeed it might have been more favourable for the latter if he had acted on the suggestion which was made when they walked together on Hampstead Heath, and when Shelley had discountenanced the publishing of Keats's earliest work.

¹ At the end of the thirteenth century, the men of the parish of Shelley, Kent, were lords of that manor. When surnames came into use they took this name as their own. In the middle of the fourteenth century John Shelley moved westward into Sussex, and represented Rye in the House of Commons. Sir Percy Shelley was living near Horsham, Sussex, when his son, the poet, was born.

John Keats, though sensitive in temperament, was never egoist, nor vain concerning folks' opinion of him: this is clear in numberless cases. Also he writes :—

For I would not be dieted with praise,
A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce.

Shelley, however, who had been living, now, over three years in Italy, and much alienated from the old circle, was conscious mainly of two facts concerning Keats: viz., the insults of Lockhart which had taken place immediately before he, Shelley, had left England: and the untimely death, accompanied by that apparently broken-hearted inscription, which he found on the grave which he had come south from Pisa to visit. Two and two put hastily together, with affection and indignation, spelt murder. His second invitation had reached Keats on landing in Naples; but even if the invalid had wished it, he had not then the strength to take a prolonged journey after that which had badly exhausted him in driving to Rome. Shelley stands by the grave which bears no sign of the honour it so richly deserves, and here he conceives a passionate desire to proclaim it.

On hearing of the youth's untimely decease at twenty-five years of age, the world became full of expressed sympathy; even Lord Byron—who on receipt of the newly published volume of 1820, would have "no more of John Keats," and brutally adds, "Flay him alive; if some of you don't I must skin him myself"—after Keats's death avers, "I would not be the

man who wrote that homicidal article for all the treasures in the world." Thus the homicidal theory took root ; and perhaps not all unhappily, for, without it, posterity would have lost Shelley's magnificent protest in "*Adonaïs*."

A few yards away from Keats's grave and nearer to the great tomb of Cestius, which overshadows the further side of the grass-plot, lies the heart of Shelley, which was plucked from the burning of his drowned body on the shore at Livorno, near Pisa. After his visit here Shelley wrote describing "the open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies" ; and then added, not without a prophecy, "It might make one in love with death to think of being buried in so sweet a place."

It seemed like a perpetual memorial of the two best lovers of Keats that the last volume of his poems should be found doubled open in the pocket of Shelley's coat when the Mediterranean waters closed over his body ; and that Leigh Hunt, who had arrived quite lately in Italy, should be there so to place the beloved poems that they might mingle with Shelley's ashes in the fire.¹

¹ The project for which Hunt had come out to Pisa fell through after Shelley's death, for Lord Byron and he failed to agree, and the Liberal journal, of which the three friends had intended to become joint editors, was never produced. Byron left for Greece, 1823 ; and Hunt remained in Italy until 1825. During the period which he spent there he produced a translation of Redi's "*Bacco in Toscano*," and "*The Religion of the Heart*." In 1844 Mrs. Shelley and her son settled a small income upon him ; and he continued to write copiously on a variety of subjects, publishing his "*Autobiography*" in 1850 —a work which was commended highly in the "*Choice of Books*," by Thomas Carlyle, whose neighbour Hunt became for a time in Cheyne Row. He was living at Putney at the time of his death in 1859.

Thus, in July, 1822, after the publication of "Adonaïs," and at the age of twenty-nine, Shelley suffered his sudden death, seventeen months only after the day that the long-drawn out "posthumous existence" of Keats had at last "come to an end."

And he who possessed in Shelley such an indignant defender was himself conspicuous for the exercise of that same characteristic. Keats, with an exquisite depth of tenderness, had, nevertheless, been wont to burst into torrents of righteous indignation at the sight of oppression or injustice. A slander against Severn? He sprang to his feet, making straight for the door, while flinging it at the company that he would be ashamed to sit with men who could utter and believe such things! Or, on hearing of another injustice which roused him—"Is there no human dust-hole into which we can sweep such fellows?" In Hampstead village one day, on seeing the butcher ill-treating a boy, the poet of five feet two flung off his coat and gave the dealer in flesh an unpoetic taste of his fists. Again, when a kitten was tortured, Keats fought a huge, heavy man for an hour, finally laying him low. One is thankful to have seen how Keats received, in his last months of physical and mental suffering, a succour and sympathy which even as a child he had been anxious to bestow, for, outside the door where his mother lay ill, this valiant guard of four years old established himself her protector, and stood for three hours with an old sword in hand, ready to kill the first person who should disturb her. And, when he was twenty years

older, surely the grief of separation from his betrothed—which, in its tendency to morbidness, was brutally called, by Haydon, sentimental madness—was perhaps but the natural sequel to that acute tenderness which was shown by him when he was fifteen and at school ; for, on hearing of the death of his mother, the broken-hearted boy crept under a desk, and there remained, hiding in an agony of grief the whole day.

It is interesting to remember that the year 1821 in which Keats left this world—the beauty of which he had keenly observed and taught people to love—was the year which first brought to Hampstead that other interpreter of its natural beauty, John Constable. The Heath, where Keats had seen so much more than ordinary eyesight sees, and where

Fugitive he sinks into some pleasant lair of wavy grass

Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,

was not left at his departure without a keen-sighted lover, but immediately became the worship-ground of another who noted and expressed truly every line of its beauty, every phase and mood of its earth and sky, and who gave to the world by his brush something of the same which the poet had given by his pen. Formal and cultivated though we may find the Heath in our day, as compared with the rural common where Shelley had bounded in poetic delight from one sandy hill-top to another, there remains, notwithstanding, the old power to draw upward the heart of man to the worship

of Nature. As it served, not only Constable, but Linnell, William Blake, Romney, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Hunt, Coleridge and many minds more for high thought and fine inspiration, so Keats's

Fair and open space of heaven

still brings men

... to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.

For that enchanted land of hills and valleys, of dimly discerned town and far country, of pure breeze, rustling branches and song-birds preserves its ancient charm to emancipate the city-pent soul, and ever serves as an altar for all reverent spirits.

INDEX

ADDISON, 46, 79
Aikin, Miss Lucy, 147, 153
Ainger, Mr., vicar, 109, 137
 " Canon, 171, 190
Akenside, Mark, 29
Arbuthnot, Dr., 73

BAILLIE, JOANNA, 26, 153, 161
Barbauld, Mrs., 26, 142
 " Rev. Rochemont, 145
Barrow Hill Road, derivation of name, 82
Belsize Manor, 83
 " sold to Charity Commissioners, 130
Bickersteth, Rev. E., 65
" Bird in Hand" Inn, 110
Blake, William, 37
Brawne, Fanny, 245
Burke, Edmund, 40
Butler, Bishop, 102
Byron, Lord, 26, 209

CAEN WOOD. *See* Kenwood.
Campbell, 26
Canning, 26
Castleden, Rev. James, 120
Chalk Farm, 81
Charles, Mrs. Elizabeth Rundle, 154
Chatham, Earl of. *See* Pitt.
Chesterfield, Earl of, 85, 90
Chicken House, The, 107
Church, Parish, 125
Church Row, 140
Churchyard, 152
" Clarissa Harlowe," extracts from, 47
Collins, Wilkie, 149
Coleridge, 26, 118, 212
Conduit Fields, 18
Constable firs, 187
 " John, R.A., 182
Crabbe, George, 26

DICKENS, CHARLES, 25
Dilke, Charles Wentworth, 239
 " Sir C. W., bequest of Keats Collection to Hampstead Libraries, 240
Dobson, Austin, 151
Doomsday Book, mention of Manour of Hamstede, 36

EDWARD III. presents benefice of Hamstede, 126
Erskine House, 39
Eton, Chalcot and Wyldes given to, hence Eton Avenue, etc., 36, 82
" Evelyn's Diary," extracts from, 87

FAWKES, GUY, 24
Fellows Road, derivation of name, 82
Fenton House, 123, 168, 177
Figgis, Mr. Samuel, 28
Fitzjohn's Avenue, derivation of, 18
Flask Walk, 111
Flaxman, 38
Foley, John Henry, 200
Frognal = Frogen Hall, 128
 " Priory, 49

GAINSBOROUGH, 33, 75
Garrick, David, 32, 75, 118
Gay, John, 37
" George" Inn, 89
Gibbet trees, 27
Gillies, Miss, 149
Glenesk, Lord, 27
Golder's Hill, 29
 " sale of, 28
Goldsmith, 75, 118
Gordon Riots, 44
Grove, The, 177
 " Cottage, 19
 " Lodge, 180

HAVERSTOCK HILL, legendary derivation of, 83

INDEX

Heath-keeper's Diary, 21
 Heath Protection Fund, 23
 Henry VI. gives Wyldes and Chalcot estates to Eton, 36, 82
 Henry VIII. gives Belsize to Westminster, 84
 Hoare, Mr. Brodie, 20
 " Mr. J. Gurney, 23, 65
 " Mr. Joseph, 65
 " Mr. Samuel, 168
 " Sir Samuel, 27
 Hogarth, 32
 " Holly Bush " Inn, 118
 Holly Hill, 112
 " Mount Chapel, 119
 Hunt, Leigh, 118, 209
 IRVING, Edward, 20, 26
 Iveagh, Lord, 27

 JACK STRAW, 24
 " Jack Straw's Castle," 24
 James I., 107
 Johnson, Dr., 48, 118
 " " on Hampstead coach, 110
 Judges' Walk, 200

 KEAN, 33
 Keats, George, 225
 " John, 216
 " " writes "Endymion," 231
 " " criticised by *Quarterly Review*, 232
 " in Keats Grove, 236
 " " writes "Ode to Nightingale," 237
 " " sails for Naples, 257
 " " death of, 263
 " " bust in Parish Church
 155
 " Tom, 229
 Kenwood Place, 43
 Kingeswelle Street, 107
 King Henry's Road, derivation of, 82
 Kit-Kat Club, 46
 Kneller, Sir Godfrey, 46

 LAMB, CHARLES, 35, 118, 212
 Linnell. *See* Blake.
 " Load of Hay " Inn, 82
 Loughborough, Lord, 92

 MACREADY, 33
 Mansfield, Lord, 74
 Maryon-Wilson, Sir John, 23
 " " Sir Spencer, 24
 " " Sir Thomas, 23
 Maurier, du, 156, 170
 Merton Road, derivation of, 82
 Metropolitan Board of Works and the Heath, 23
 More, Hannah, 26
 Morel, the Abbé, 122

 NEAVE, SIR THOMAS, 104, 168
 Netley Cottage, 181
 New College, 158
 North End Road, 27
 Norway House, 110

 OPPIDANS ROAD, derivation of name, 82

 PALMER, SIR GEOFFREY, 96
 Park, John James, 125
 Parliament Hill, 23
 Parry, Sir Edward, 66
 Pelham, Rev. Dr., 65
 " Pepys' Diary," extracts from, 86, 102
 Perceval, Hon. Sir Spencer, 89, 168
 " Pickwick Papers " extracts from, 25, 45
 Pilgrim, Charles, 105
 Pitt House, 27
 Poor House, The Old, 166
 Pope, Alexander, 46, 74
 Portland Place, width of, 204
 Primrose Hill, 81
 Priory Lodge, 48
 Provost Road, derivation of, 82
 Pryors, 65, 105

 REYNOLDS, Sir JOSHUA, 33, 75, 118
 Romney, George, R.A., 113
 Rosslyn, Earl of. *See* Loughborough.
 " House, 18, 90

 SANDY ROAD, The, 39
 Scott, Sir Gilbert, 178
 Sedley, Charles, 79
 Selwyn, Bishop, 150
 Sharpe, Henry, 199
 Shelley, 212
 Sherlock, Dean, 141

INDEX

Siddons, Mrs., 26, 201
Soame, Dr., on health of Hampstead, 69
" Spaniard's " Inn, 43
Spanish Armada signalled, 20
Stanfield, Clarkson, 100
Steele, Sir Richard, 46, 78
" condemnation of wells, 55
Steevens, George, 47
Sterne, 34
Stow House, 35
St. Mary's Chapel, 122
St. Peter's Church, 89, 132

TENNYSON, LORD, 111
" Three Pigeons " Inn, 19
Thurlow, Lord, 95
Tudor House, 20

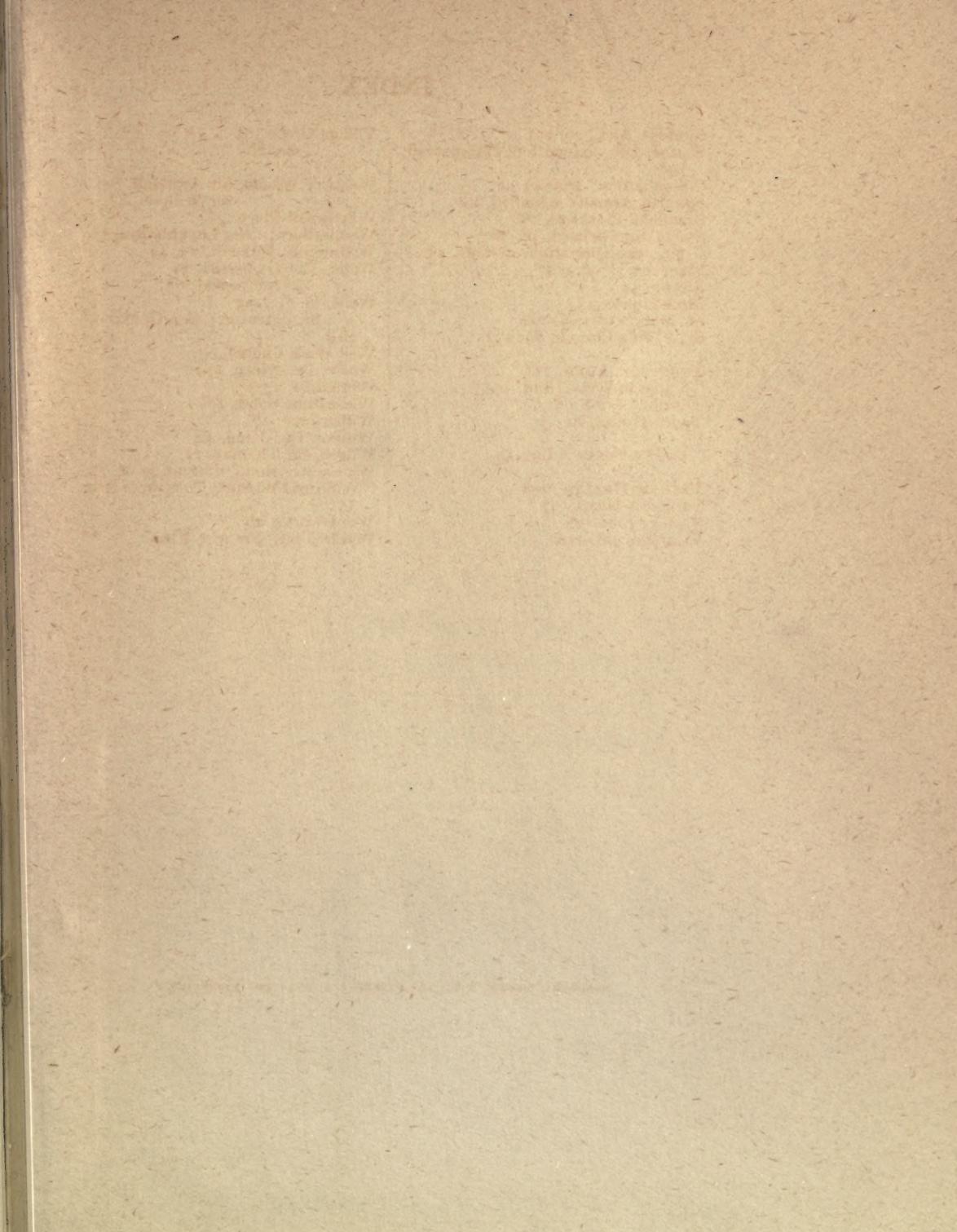
" UPPER FLASK " Inn, 45

VALE OF HEALTH, 208
Vane, Sir Harry, 97
Varley, John, 38
Vicarage, old, 118

Village Green, 82
" Tree, 20

WAAD or Waade, Sir Armigall, 84
" " Sir William, 85

Weatherall Place, 76
Wedderburn. *See* Loughborough.
Wellington, Duke of, 26, 42
Wells, The 1st period, 51
" 2nd period, 68
Wells, H. G., 152
" Sir Spencer. *See* Golder's
Hill.
Well Walk Chapel, 63
White, Dr., vicar, 109
Whitefield, 25
Whitestone pond, 20
Wilberforce, 26
William IV., King, 42
Wilson, Sir Thomas, 22
Winchester Road, derivation of, 82
" Wine and Walnuts," extracts from
33
Wordsworth, 26
Wyldes, 35. *See also* Eton





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